

OPINION

for an academic position "Full professor" in a professional field 3.8. "Economics", scientific specialty "Economics and management (competitiveness of enterprises in trade)"

by Full Prof. Dr. Vesselina Vasileva Dimitrova, professional field 3.8. "Economics", scientific specialty "World Economy and International Economic Relations"

about the scientific works, teaching and research activities of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Yaneva Dimitrova, member of the Department "Economics and Management of Trade and Services" at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Economics – Varna

1. General information

The presented opinion is prepared by Full Prof. Dr. Vesselina Dimitrova, professional field 3.8. "Economics", scientific specialty "World Economy and international economic relations" on the basis of Order of the Rector of University of Economics-Varna No 06-184/18.12.2024, on the basis of Art. 4 in connection with Art. 29 a (1) of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), art. 7, para. 2 and art. 123, para. 3 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff (PRAS) at the University of Economics-Varna and in connection with the announcement in the State Gazette No. 100/26.11.2024 for the competition for the academic position of "Full professor" in a professional field 3.8. "Economics", scientific specialty "Economics and management (competitiveness of enterprises in trade)", as well as on the basis of the Decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Economics at the University of Economics-Varna (Minutes 18/12/2024)

and Notification letter for the decisions of the First meeting of the Scientific jury of the competition dated 02/04/2025 according to Art. 4, para. 8 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), art. 124, para. 2 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University of Economics-Varna.

2. Competition details

The competition is announced in the State Gazette no. 100/26.11.2024 is for an academic position "Full professor" in professional field 3.8. "Economics", scientific specialty "Economics and management (competitiveness of enterprises in trade)" for the needs of the department "Economics and management of trade and services" at the Faculty of Economics at the University of Economics-Varna.

3. Candidates for the competition

According to the rules of the announced competition, only one candidate is submitted full documents within the established period: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Yaneva Dimitrova. The candidate meets the minimum national requirements, (MNI or quantitative requirements) according to Art. 2b para. 2 and 3 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB).

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Dimitrov has been working at the University of Economics - Varna as a lecturer in the "Economics and Management of Trade and Services" department since 1988. In the year 2000 she defended a PhD thesis entitled "Marketing aspects of competitive positioning in retail trade" and acquired the scientific degree "PhD doctor" (Protocol 11-16/04.07.2000). Since 2004 she has held the academic position of "Associate professor" according to Protocol 9/06/08/2004. of Commission 16 of the High Scientific Commission of Bulgaria (VAK). The candidate is proficient in business English (Certificate of University of Economics-Varna 157/27.05.1992).

4. Description of scientific publications

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Dimitrova has participated in this competition for the academic position of " Full professor" in professional field 3.8. "Economics", scientific specialty "Economics and management (competitiveness of enterprises in trade) with 81 publications and one the main monograph, published in 2024.

The presented publications are in accordance with the requirements of Art. 118, paragraph 2 item 3-6 in connection with Art. 129 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University of Economics - Varna and their description is, as follows:

- 9 monographs (including 3 in co-authorship);
- 5 studies (including 1 in co-authorship);
- 20 articles;
- 33 papers (including 11 in co-authorship);
- 11 textbooks and didactic materials (all co-authored);
- 4 other publications (including 3 in co-authorship).

The authorship shows 42% of personal participation of the candidate in the total number of publications. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Dimitrova has included her publications in Bulgarian language in the National Reference List of Bulgaria (according to the national agency NACID). Her personal Scopus h-index is 1, Web of Science has no h-index information. A reference of the candidate's citations shows 4 citations in Scopus, and all citations are made from Bulgarian authors. The other citations of the candidate have a total amount of 42 and are from both Bulgarian and foreign authors.

The main monograph for this competition of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Dimitrova is published in 2024 and is entitled "Bargaining power evolution of retail and wholesale enterprises)". The monograph is edited by "Science and Economics" press house of the University of Economics-Varna (Prof. Tsani Kalyandzhiev; Book No 99) with ISBN number 978-954-21-1181-8, COBISS.BG-ID - 67509256.

The monograph is divided into three chapters and analyzes through a comparative structural analysis the evolution of the bargaining power in commercial transactions between the participants in the supply chain of consumer products for commercial enterprises in Bulgaria for the period 2000-2021.

The first chapter "Vertical relations and bargaining power of participants in the supply chain of consumer goods" examines the relationship between the participants in the trade exchange from the point of view of economic theory and includes the ideas of the main authors on this topic. A comparative description of all elements of the commercial service is done- from the

perspective of marketing and strategic management of companies. Subsequently, the idea of commercial negotiations and the concept of market power and bargaining power is done from the point of view of philosophy, international economic relations, legislation etc. The further methodological framework for research is laid out in the monograph through the selection of indicators and data, including a review of existing research on similar topics.

The second chapter "Investigating changes in the bargaining power of commercial enterprises" reviews various studies, research projects and scientific conferences from the 1950s to the present day regarding the bargaining power of commercial intermediaries, including the factors that influence them. Subsequently, the concept of abuse in negotiations and EU policy, US legal decisions are clarified. In this chapter, an empirical study is made of the transformation of the bargaining power in Bulgaria for the period 2008-2021 based on data from National Statistical Institute, Eurostat and Euromonitor data.

Chapter three "Digitalization and Bargaining Power of Commercial Enterprises - Prospects and Challenges" adds a new aspect to the topic through the factor of "digitalization" as an advantage and challenge in the study of bargaining power of commercial enterprises. An analysis of various platforms and applications for innovation in commercial activity has been done. Conclusions are drawn on the effects of digitalization and its regulation approaches, in relation to existing or new commercial business models.

The range of other publications presented by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Dimitrova includes problems of negotiation processes and the competitive positioning of companies in Varna, the region and the country; impact of digitization on the competitiveness of companies, including neural networks, blockchain and cryptocurrencies; comparative analysis of labor productivity in a European context, study of the economic and social effects of trade for consumers; study of effects on supply chains, retailing, distribution, etc.

It can be summarized that the quantitative and content characteristics of the presented scientific publication after the last competition procedure for Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Dimitrova is in accordance with the requirements under Art. 118, paragraph 2 item 3-6 in connection with Art. 129 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University of Economics - Varna.

5. Teaching activity

The teaching activity of Assoc. Dr. Violeta Dimitrova covers courses in the Bachelor degree, Master degree in full-time, part-time and distance e-learning, and also in the doctoral program "Economics and Management (Trade)". For the period 2022-2024 the lecture courses and developed curricula in the Bachelor degree are in Commercial management, Business Communications, Sales Management, Commercial Operations Management, Business Communications and Negotiations, Competition and Competitiveness, Sales and Advertising Management, Commercial Business Competitiveness. For the same period in the Master degree Assoc. Dr. Violeta Dimitrova has lecture courses and developed curricula on Trade Management, Trade Business Competitiveness, Trade Organization and Trade Operations Management, Graduate's Seminar. She also offers two disciplines in the doctoral program at the department.

The lecture courses at the Bachelor degree are for students from the specialties "Economics and Trade", "Business Economics", "Insurance". In the Master's degree, the lecture courses

are presented to students from specialties "Trade Business", "Global Trade Business", "Omnichannel Trade Business", "Management".

For the period 2019-2025 the candidate teaches a total of 19 foreign students in the "Strategic Retail Management" course in the Erasmus + program, according to the Official Note from University of Economics-Varna No-21-882/06.12.2024. Assoc. Dr. Violeta Dimitrova has different specializations in University of Economics-Varna, Great Britain, USA, France and academic exchange in 2004 at the University of Thessaloniki (Greece).

In 2014 Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Dimitrova was successfully a supervisor of a PhD student, according to the Reference and Official Note under Art. 121 paragraph 1 pt. 14 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University of Economics - Varna. She has participated many times in scientific juries on the basis of National Law (ZARASRB).

It can be summarized that the quantitative and qualitative assessment of the educational and teaching activity of Assoc. Dr. Violeta Dimitrova complies with the requirements under Art. 129 (5) of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University of Economics - Varna.

6. Participation in scientific projects and scientific forums

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Dimitrova is the supervisor of four research projects to support the development of PhD theses. She participates in ten scientific projects, five of which she is the project manager. She also participated in six educational projects, of which four were international, including as the project manager of one of them. She has participated in the organization of the student scientific conference "Trade 2020" at University of Economics – Varna and is an expert on Erasmus+ educational programs at the same university. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Dimitrova prepares reviews for articles, studies, textbooks and other publications for members of all economic universities, including in Sofia and Svishtov. She is a member of Working Groups at National Accreditation Agency (NAOA) and also advises businesses as an expert.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Dimitrova is a member of the editorial board of the European Journal of Service and Management, whose edition is active until 2018. She participates in two editorial boards at the University of Economics-Varna, and until 2015 is a member of the editorial board of a journal of the Kherson Scientific and Technical University in Ukraine.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Dimitrova has been a member of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria since June 10, 2022. She is a member of the Management Board of the Territorial Organization of National Unions (NTS)-Varna for the period 2008-2016, as well as a member of the Control Board for the period 2016-2024 with a current second period of membership until 2028.

7. Identification of scientific contributions

The monograph of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Dimitrova and the submitted publications for the competition allow us to highlight contributions mainly of a scientific-theoretical nature and contributions of a scientific-applied nature.

Contributions of a scientific and theoretical nature are the following:

1. Through the study and systematization of the fragmented scientific knowledge about the bargaining power of the participants in trade exchange in economic theory, with a focus on institutional, marketing and management, the theory of economics and trade management is enriched in the field of the bargaining power of trading enterprises as a source of competitive advantage;

2. Through theoretical and empirical descriptive analysis, the effects of digitization on competition and trade competitiveness have been investigated.

Contributions of a scientific and applied nature are the following:

1. The proposed system of indicators for the study of the evolution of bargaining power with the help of comparative structural analysis was tested on the example of commercial enterprises in Bulgaria during the period 2000-2021.

2. The impact of digital technologies on the bargaining power of modern commercial enterprises is analyzed, and the challenges and prospects for their development are outlined.

3. Through an empirical analysis, the competitiveness of trade as an economic sector and its contribution to the economic development of the country in comparison with the EU countries was investigated.

The candidate for the competition has listed other contributions, incl. of a scientific-methodological nature and contributions of an educational-methodological nature, which have a complementary nature.

8. Other achievements of the candidate

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Dimitrova has been a member of the Academic Council of the University of Economics - Varna since 2002. Since 2004 she is a member of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Economics at the University of Economics-Varna. In the period 2003-2005 she was the deputy director of the Center for Master's Education at the University of Economics-Varna. For the period 2005-2011 is the Director of the College of Tourism. She has 12 years of experience as the Head of the "Economics and Trade Management" department at the Varna University of Economics. She held the position of vice- rector for International Cooperation, vice-director of the Research Institute, deputy chairman and chairman of the General Assembly – all structures and positions are at the University of Economics-Varna.

9. Plagiarism

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Dimitrova has signed a declaration of authenticity of her scientific publications. According to the report of the Ministry of Education in Bulgaria in Strikeplagiarism system, the candidate's monograph is original with relevant percentage KS 1: 8.99% and percentage KS 2: 2.36%.

10. Recommendations and critical remarks to the candidate

My main remark to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Dimitrova is that her monograph work would win if, *firstly*, the analysis of data and indicators in the second chapter does not stop till 2022. and *secondly*, even a partial study can be included in the third chapter dedicated on digitization and bargaining power in commercial enterprises in Bulgaria.

This remark made is entirely in the spirit of collegiality and goodwill, because it is essentially on an already published scientific work, behind which are also the names of relevant scientific reviewers.

My recommendation to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Dimitrova is to achieve a higher citation index of her publications in Scopus/WoS and to direct her future publications mainly to Scopus/WoS editions. The recommendation made is entirely wishful.

11. Conclusion

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Dimitrova has contributed over the years to the preservation of all traditions and accumulated values of the University of Economics-Varna and by achieving the academic position of "Full professor" in professional field 3.8. "Economics", scientific specialty "Economics and management (competitiveness of enterprises in trade), she will have the opportunity to strengthen the position of her department, the faculty and the university that she represents.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Dimitrova is a strongly motivated and goal-oriented employee, possessing high ambition for her professional commitments, working with a desire for perfectionism and is a recognizable trade expert in the city, the region and the country.

Assessing comprehensively both the research and teaching activities of the candidate Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Yaneva Dimitrova for the academic position "Full professor", I express my opinion that her documentation for the competition meets the criteria for that position at the University of Economics-Varna and that plagiarism has not been proven in her scientific publications in accordance with the national law.

I propose to the respected members of the Scientific jury to give the academic title "Full professor" to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Yaneva Dimitrova.

The opinion is prepared by:

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

Full Prof. Dr. Vesselina Dimitrova

March, 12 2025
Varna (Bulgaria)



STANDPOINT

Вх. № PA20-375/11.03.2025г.

ON THE SELECTIVE PLACEMENT PROCESS FOR THE APPOINTMENT TO AN ACADEMIC POSITION OF "PROFESSOR" ANNOUNCED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS – VARNA IN PROFESSIONAL AREA 3.8. ECONOMICS AND THE SCIENTIFIC SPECIALITY "ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT (COMPETITIVENESS OF ENTERPRISES IN TRADE)

by Prof. Teodorina Zhelyazkova Turlakova, PhD, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Economics-Varna

1. General information and competition data

The competition for professor was announced in the State Gazette „*Darzhaven Vestnik*“ No. 100/26.11.2024 in the scientific specialty "Economics and management (Competitiveness of enterprises in trade)" for the needs of the department of „Economics and management of commerce and services“ at the Faculty of Economics, University of Economics - Varna.

The scientific jury for the competition for the position of "Professor" announced in State Gazette „*Darzhaven Vestnik*“ No. 100/26.11.2024 in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Competitiveness of enterprises in trade)" was appointed by Order No. RD 06-184/18.12.2024 of the Rector of the University of Economics - Varna. This statement on the competition for the academic position of „Professor“ is prepared based on the decisions of the first meeting of the scientific jury held on 04.02.2024 at 11:00 a.m., in person and by using technical means (video link and telephone). In the same meeting, Prof. Dancho Danchev, PhD from the department of „Economics and management of commerce and services“ of the University of Economics - Varna was elected as the chairman of the scientific jury, and Prof. Dancho Danchev, PhD (University of Economics - Varna), Prof. Mariana Bozhinova, PhD (Academy of Economics "D. A. Tsenov" - Svishtov) and Prof. Septemvrina Kostova, PhD (University of National and World Economy - Sofia) were elected as reviewers.

2. Brief information about the candidate:

The only candidate in the announced competition who meets the minimum national requirements for the academic position of „Professor“ is assoc. prof. Violeta Yaneva Dimitrova, PhD. She graduated from the Mathematics High School „Dr. P. Beron“ (Varna) and Master's degree from the Higher Institute of National Economy - Varna (now University of Economics -Varna). In 2000, assoc. prof. V. Dimitrova acquired a scientific and educational degree „Doctor“ with a scientific specialty (code) 05.02.18 - Economics and management (commerce), diploma №26942/08.09.2000. Her biographical path in teaching and scientific work began in 1988 as a lecturer in the department of „Economics and management of commerce and services“ at the Faculty of Economics. **She was a chief assistant from 1997 to 2004 and has held the position of „associate professor“ in the same department since 2004,** which exceeds the requirements of Art. 118, paragraph 2, items 1 and 2 of the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at University of Economics -Varna (PRAS).

Assoc. prof. V. Dimitrova, PhD, 's professional path is distinguished by her extensive experience and intensive work in academic activity and project development. She actively participates in and, during specific periods, manages the international activities of the



University of Economics - Varna and responsibly performs several administrative functions. Her scientific work and interests are mainly in the competitiveness of trade organizations. Associate professor Dimitrova leads lectures and exercises in the Master's and Bachelor's Degrees, actively participates in the development of a large number of curricula for the various educational and qualification degrees, manages several educational (including international) and scientific projects, as well as projects for the development of parts of doctoral dissertations and the organization of scientific events. Yearly, she works with graduate students, participates in the initiation of a student scientific conference to support the students' research activities. She has supervised 5 PhD students in the doctoral program "Economics and management (commerce)", one of whom successfully defended.

The professional development of assoc. prof. Violeta Dimitrova, PhD has been accompanied by serious administrative activities, including: a member of the Academic council since 2002 and of the Faculty council at the Faculty of Economics (in some periods she is also a member of the Faculty council of the Faculty of Informatics); Director of the College of tourism at the University of economics - Varna, Chairman and Deputy chairman of the General assembly of the University of Economics - Varna; Deputy director of Master's degree training center, Deputy director of the Research institute at the University of economics - Varna; Head of the department of Economics and management of commerce and services in the period 2011-2023; member of attestation commissions; Vice rector for international cooperation and public relations, at the same time she successfully managed the project activities at the university in the period 2011-2015.

In addition to all the above, assoc. prof. Violeta Dimitrova also participates in lectures and exercises at foreign universities under the Erasmus program, and in the period 2012-2015 she was an expert in the program at the University of economics - Varna. She has participated in specializations and trainings in economics, strategic and marketing management, logistics, etc. in the USA, England and France. She is a member of the editorial boards of prestigious publications of the University of economics - Varna, and journals of universities in Poland and Ukraine, reviewer of textbooks, monographs, and scientific studies.

Her scientific research interests are in the fields of:

Competition and competitiveness, trade marketing and sales management, trade operations management, business communications and negotiations. Until now, assoc. prof. Dimitrova has over 82 scientific publications verified in her profile at NACID (National centre for information and documentation) and in the register of publications of the University of economics - Varna: including 9 monographs, 5 scientific studies, about 53 scientific articles and papers, 11 textbooks, and teaching aids.

3. Quantitative and substantive characteristics of the presented scientific works and fulfillment of the requirements for occupying the academic position:

A total of 54 scientific publications (28 single-authored) were submitted for participation in the competition for the academic position of "professor" by assoc. prof. Violeta Dimitrova, PhD, including: 8 monographs and scientific studies (one of which is reported as a book based on a defended doctoral dissertation), 12 publications in specialized scientific journals, 25 publications from scientific forums, 6 items in the section textbooks and teaching aids, 3 articles in the section other popular science publications. Web of Science and Scopus references show 2 scientific studies and 2 scientific papers registered. As a major work, assoc. prof. Violeta Dimitrova, PhD presents the single-authored monograph – "Bargaining power evolution of retail and wholesale enterprises (on the example of trade in consumer products)",



Varna: Science and Economics, monographic library "Prof. Tsani Kalyandjiev", vol. 99, ISBN 978-954-21-1181-8, 228 printed pages. The total number of standard pages personally contributed by assoc. prof. V. Dimitrova, PhD, in the publications submitted for the competition, is over 1500 pages.

Upon a more in-depth review of the publications in the profile of assoc. prof. Violeta Dimitrova, PhD, in NACID (National centre for information and documentation) and those presented in the competition, it can be concluded that the number of publications after the academic position of „associate professor“ (in 2004) is more than those reflected in the references, which means that a selected part of the candidate's total publications are presented in the competition.

According to the reference for the fulfillment of minimum national requirements for the academic position of "PROFESSOR" in the field of higher education 3. "Social, economic and legal sciences", according to art. 2b, para 2 and 3 of the LDASRB (Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria), where part of the list of publications are used, the accumulated points by sections are as follows: the main monograph on the competition "Bargaining power evolution of retail and wholesale enterprises (on the example of trade in consumer products)", carries 100 points, 75 points from a published book. Points have been generated in the following areas: in Web of Science and Scopus – from scientific articles and reports - 45 points; from scientific studies in the same database - 90 points. Section "D", the submitted publications are duly evaluated according to the applied scale and accumulate 470 points (with a minimum of 200 points). The candidate in the competition exceeds the required number of points from citations of her scientific publications. Under section "F" the accumulated more than 300 points are from: the scientific supervision of a successfully defended PhD student (40 points); from the participation and management of national scientific and educational projects, and from published textbooks and teaching aids. In summary, in all sections of the Report on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements, the candidate assoc. prof. Violeta Dimitrova, PhD, exceeds the minimum required for the academic position of „Professor“ many times.

According to the reference for the academic position "PROFESSOR" in the field of higher education 3. "Social, economic and legal sciences", according to art. 77, item 5 of the RDAS (Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff) at the University of Economics - Varna (in force from 01.07.2021) the declared part of the general list of publications, citations, number of PhD students defended and participation in projects shows the following results according to the point system:

Table 1

QUANTITATIVE REQUIREMENTS
for holding the academic position of "Professor"
at the University of Economics - Varna
on the basis of art. 2b, para. 5 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff
in the Republic of Bulgaria

№	Indicators	Points for "professor"	Points declared by the candidate
1.	Scientific papers	60	173,66
2.	Scientific articles and studies	115	170
3.	Publications in Scopus and/or Web of Science	30	90



4.	Citations in Scopus and/or Web of Science	15	60
5.	Doctoral students defended their thesis	40	40
6.	Research projects (participation and/or management)	15	90 from basic scientific research out of a total 255 points

It should be noted that only 3 of the 4 publications in Scopus and/or Web of Science are classified under item 3. One of the scientific studies, which is also published in these leading databases, is referred to in item 2 for scientific articles and studies. The assessment of this scientific study in Section 2 should be 15 points according to the applied point system. Applying these points to the studies in item 2 would again lead to the fulfillment of the requirements under the criteria "Scientific articles and studies". Evaluating the studies by the points in the section (15 points) would be to disadvantage the candidate with points that are reasonable given the publication of the scientific study in the prestigious edition of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and its presence in the Scopus register. Therefore, I accept and confirm the points indicated by the candidate in his self-assessment (45 points).

A large part of the candidate's scientific works – articles and papers are in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-known databases of high scientific value, and others are in the database of the national library COBISS and the National reference list of NACID (National Centre for Information and Documentation). The majority of the publications of the candidate for professor are devoted to topics related to the competitiveness of enterprises in the trade. Assoc. prof. Violeta Dimitrova, PhD, presents a sufficiently large number of research publications, including in the leading databases, her publications are also cited in these databases, participates in a large number of research projects, has defended a PhD student and supervises other young researchers, which is why her candidacy exceeds the quantitative requirements for the academic position of "professor" accepted by the University of Economics - Varna.

In addition to exceeding the total points required to compete for the academic position of professor, the reports show that the specific requirements for all sections are met.

All of the above gives reason to say that the submitted publications and supporting documents show that the candidacy of assoc. prof. Violeta Dimitrova, PhD, meets the criteria and requirements under art. 77, items 3, 4, 5 and 6 in connection with art. 86 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University of Economics - Varna.

4. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of teaching and learning work

Assoc. prof. V. Dimitrova, PhD, develops and teaches lectures and exercises in several academic courses in the bachelor's and master's degree programmes, as well as in the PhD programme "Economics and management (commerce)". She started her teaching activity in 1988 and continues it until today (2025). She has many years of experience in leading seminar classes and tutorials. For the period (academic years 2022/23 and 2023/24) reflected in the required reports, the hours she has taught have always been above the average hours accepted as per the norm. All this, as well as the high evaluations by students in the attestation of her teaching activity, indicate excellent professional training, competence and scientific development, which are important professional arguments for her participation in this competition.



It is noteworthy the high relative share of courses conducted by Assoc. Prof. Violeta Dimitrova, PhD is in the scientific specialty of the current competition. Among them are the disciplines "Competition and competitiveness," "Competitiveness of trade business," "Trade management," "Trade marketing and logistics," etc. The scientific research and publications of assoc. prof. Violeta Dimitrova, PhD, are approbated in the academic work in the taught disciplines, elements of them are intertwined in the conducted trainings in foreign universities, in the developed curricula, textbooks and teaching aids, her work with graduate students and the supervision of doctoral students is also in the mentioned direction. She is involved in 10 research projects (5 of which she is the project manager), with the scientific research projects directly and indirectly related to competition and competitiveness in trade. This kind of symbiosis gives the candidate a high level of professional development in the scientific field of the competition.

5. A Brief description of the presented scientific works/publications and synthesized assessment of the leading scientific and applied contributions of the candidate

The scientific production presented in the competition deals with actual theoretical, methodological, and practical problems in economics and management of trade business and, more specifically, the competitiveness of trade enterprises. In the main monographic work, the issues of the bargaining power of consumer goods trade enterprises are thoroughly theoretically and analytically considered. It emphasizes the importance of digitalization for an evolutionary change of bargaining power and defends the thesis that it does not lead to the elimination of trade intermediaries. Using a system of indicators, the transformation in bargaining power and the impact of market conditions on trade as an economic sector are examined, and the prospects and challenges for economic policy in the face of digitalization are outlined. In the publications of the candidate for professor, several main areas of research are clearly distinguished: competitiveness of the trade enterprise; the effects of digitalization on competition, competitiveness and competitive dynamics; marketing, institutional and managerial aspects of competitive positioning, including in omni-channel business; market aspects and labour productivity in retail; supply chain relationships; educational infrastructure, trade training and project activities, etc. In support of my thesis, I can cite some of the most interesting titles in this direction from the main studies of the candidate for professor: Bargaining power evolution of retail and wholesale enterprises (on the example of trade in consumer products), Theoretical analysis of the effects of digitalization on economic growth and competition (single-authored chapter of a collective monograph), Gross margin and buyer power in bulgarian food retailing, Evolution of retail distribution functions in an omnichannel environment and many others.

Following the specific results of the scientific publication activity formulated by the candidate, which have the character of scientific and scientific-applied contributions, they can be summarized in the following important directions:

- With scientific-theoretical character – *the study and systematization of the theory of the bargaining power of the participants in the commercial exchange; the relationship between the concepts of market power and bargaining power is further developed; the essence is summarized and the problems of the trade enterprise are investigated; through theoretical and descriptive analysis, the effects of digitalization on competition and competitiveness are evaluated;*
- Contributions of a scientific-methodological nature – *methodological problems in the assessment of the bargaining power of trade enterprises are summarized and a set of*



indicators for comparative structural analysis of vertically integrated sectors is developed; a system of indicators for assessing the competitive structure of trade is substantiated; the applicability of the managerial approach "competitive dynamics" is studied and substantiated; the scope of application of a computer system model neural networks for research in the field of competitive positioning of retail chains and consumer trust factors in e-commerce is developed;

- *Contributions of a scientific and applied nature – a system of indicators for studying bargaining power has been proposed; an empirical analysis of the competitiveness of trade as an economic sector has been carried out; the method of competitive dynamics has been applied to study the behavior of trade enterprises in the conditions of digitalization and omnichannel environment; differences in labor productivity in Bulgaria and other CEE countries have been studied; the influence of digital technologies on bargaining power has been analyzed.*

Contributions of an educational and methodological nature – teaching materials have been developed in operations management; competition and competitiveness; sales as a goal and result; interdisciplinarity as a competitive advantage of education in the field of commerce, etc.

6. Main critical remarks and recommendations.

I have no critical remarks to assoc. prof. Violeta Dimitrova, PhD. My main and only recommendation to the candidate for professor is directed to her future professional plans. After getting acquainted with all aspects of her professional work, I can recommend that she should focus on working with the young scientists in the department and their academic research, so that her significant publication assets and acquired professional experience will contribute even more to the consolidation of the research field "Competition and competitiveness of trade enterprises", which assoc. prof. Violeta Dimitrova, PhD has managed to create and develop. This recommendation confirms my positive attitude and high positive evaluation of the overall scientific activity of assoc. prof. Violeta Dimitrova, PhD, and her active teaching, scientific research, project, methodological, and administrative activities.

8. Conclusion

Taking into account the professional qualities and scientific research of assoc. prof. Violeta Dimitrova, PhD, the qualities and contributions of the presented scientific production, the current scientific and applied developments, the diverse teaching, project, methodological and administrative activities, I strongly recommend to the Dear members of the scientific jury to elect assoc. prof. Violeta Dimitrova, PhD, for the academic position "professor" in the professional field 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and management (competitiveness of the enterprises in trade)" for the needs of the department „Economics and management of commerce and services“ at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Economics - Varna.

04.03.2025, Varna

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

(Prof. Teodorina Turlakova, PhD)



STANDPOINT

on the selective placement process for the appointment to an academic position of "Professor" in professional area 3.8. Economics, academic specialization "Economics and Management (Competitiveness of Enterprises in the Trade Industries) at the University of Economics – Varna ("Darzhaven Vestnik" state gazette, issue 100 from November 26, 2024)

1. General information

The standpoint was prepared by: Assoc. Prof. Dr Ivanka Andreeva Nikolova; UNWE (University of National and World Economy), Department of Economics of Trade; professional area 3.8. Economics, academic specialization 05.02.18 "Economics and Management (Economics of Trade, Hospitality and Restaurants)".

Grounds for the preparation of the standpoint: Order by the Rector of the University of Economics – Varna RD-06-184 from December 18, 2024 for the appointment of the members of the Scientific Jury on the grounds of Art. 29a (1) of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), Art. 7, Line 2 and Art. 123, Line 3 of the Bylaws for the Development of the Academic Staff (BDAS) at the University of Economics – Varna, the decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Economics (Minutes Nr 18 from December 12, 2024), as well as on the grounds of Notification Letter regarding the decisions of the first session of the Academic Board held on February 4, 2025 on the selective placement process.

2. Information about the selective placement process

The selective placement process for the appointment to an academic position of "Professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economics and Legal Sciences, professional area 3.8. Economics, in the academic specialization "Economics and Management (Competitiveness of Enterprises in the Trade)" was announced for the needs of the department "Economics and Management of Commerce and Services" at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Economics – Varna, in *Darzhaven Vestnik*, issue 100 from November 26, 2024.

3. Selective Placement Process Candidate

One (1) candidate submitted their application for the announced selective placement process, within the relevant deadline – Assoc. Prof. Dr Violeta Yaneva Dimitrova. The candidate meets and even exceeds several times the minimal national requirements for the academic position of "Professor" in the field of higher education in which the selective placement process has been announced, as per Art. 2b, Lines 2 and 3 of LDASRB. Assoc. Prof. Dr Violeta Yaneva Dimitrova convincingly fulfils and also solidly surpasses the additional quantitative requirements as per Art. 118 (2), section 5 of LDASRB.

4. Data about the Candidate

Assoc. Prof. Dr Violeta Yaneva Dimitrova has been employed in a teaching position by the department of "Economics and Management of Commerce and Services" at the Faculty



of Economics at the University of Economics - Varna since 1988 up till now. In 2000, she defended successfully a dissertation for the conferral of the educational and **academic degree "doctor"** in the academic specialization 05.02.18 "Economics and Management (Commerce)" with diploma Nr 26942 from September 08, 2000, issued by the Higher Attestation Commission, Sofia. In 2004, Dr Dimitrova assumed the **academic position "Associate Professor"** in the department of "Economics and Management of Commerce and Services" at the University of Economics - Varna, which was in compliance with the requirements of Art. 118, line 2, sections 1 and 2 of the Bylaws for the Development of the Academic Staff (BDAS). The academic interests of Assoc. Prof. Dr Dimitrova are in the field of competition and competitiveness of enterprises in the trade industries, commercial marketing, the sales management, the of trade operations management, business communications and negotiations.

5. Description of Academic Research

Assoc. Prof. Dr Violeta Dimitrova authored 82 publications during the time of her teaching and research activities from 1988 up to 2024, as a result of which she achieved a personal h-index of 5 in Google Scholar and as well as an h-index of 1 in the Scopus citation database. In this current selective placement process for the appointment to a position of "professor" in professional area 3.8. Economics, academic specialization "Economics and Management (Competitiveness of Enterprises in the Trade)", she participates with a total of 54 publications. The publications put forward can be grouped as follows:

- **Monographs** – 5 publications, including:
 - 1 single-authored monograph, intended as a main habilitation thesis;
 - 1 single-authored monograph – presented as a book on a defended doctoral dissertation;
 - 3 co-authored monographs.
- **Scientific studies** – 3 items (2 of which are single-authored and this fulfil the requirements of having at least one single-authored study for the appointment to an academic position of "professor". Both single-authored studies are in English and are published in the peer-reviewed and indexed world-known database Scopus.);
- **Scientific articles** – 12 items (single-authored);
- **Scientific papers** – 25 items (12 single-authored);
- **University textbooks** – 2 items (co-authored), and for one of these she was the team leader;
- **University teaching aids** – 4 items (all co-authored), and for 2 of these she was the academic editor;
- **Other popular-scientific publications** – 3 items.

The publications put forward by Assoc. Prof. Dimitrova to be reviewed as part of the announced selective placement process have been published by specialized academic publisher and do not replicate those used for the assumption of the educational



and academic degree of “doctor”, as well as those for the appointment to the academic position of “associate professor”.

In terms of content, the works put forward align with the subject matter of the announced selective placement process and cover the following more significant issues: an assessment of the competitiveness of the trade economic sector and of the trade enterprises; the bargaining power of trade enterprises as a source of competitive advantage and their institutional role in the supply chain; the relationship between the concepts of market power and vertical bargaining power; the role of the marketing function in the trade enterprises as a source of competitive advantage; the labour productivity in trade as one of the basic metrics of competitiveness; the managerial approach of “competitive dynamics” for the examination of the competitive behaviour of trade enterprises in times of digitalization and in an omni-channel environment; the effects of digitalization on the competition and the competitiveness of trade; the relationship between electronic commerce (e-commerce) and economic growth; the application of blockchain technology and smart contracts; the impact of digital technologies on the development of trade and its role in the national economy in comparison with countries from Central and Eastern Europe, etc.

The monograph work of Assoc. Prof. Dr Dimitrova, “Bargaining power evolution of retail and wholesale enterprises (on the example of trade in consumer products)” was discussed at the primary academic division, which is the department of Economics and Management of Commerce and Services, and was reviewed by two habilitated reviewers (Minutes Nr 7 from January 15, 2024). In 2024, it was published by the specialized academic publisher “*Nauka i Ikonomika*” (Science and Economics) of the University of Economics - Varna, Library “Prof. Tsani Kalyandzhiev”, under number ISBN 978-954-21-1181-8. The monograph work is the result of and a natural logical follow-up to the problems discussed in a significant part of the publications put forward for the competition.

The monograph work “Bargaining power evolution of retail and wholesale enterprises (on the example of trade in consumer products)” reveals the outcome of integral and completed theoretical and empirical research of the bargaining power of trade enterprises as a source of competitive advantage represented through their institutional role in the retail supply chain and its evolution in times of digital transformation.

The first chapter offers critical analysis of the economic theory of the relationship between vertical market agents focusing on the place of the transaction in the institutional theory, the theory of marketing and strategic planning. It examines the methodological problems when assessing the bargaining power of trade enterprises. It justifies and offers a research methodology that includes stages, methods and a system of indicators for a comparative structural analysis of vertically related economic sectors.

The second chapter examines the economic practice and politics in the field of bargaining power of trade enterprises following the proposed methodology and system



of indicators. Comparative structural analysis is used to study the transformations in bargaining power and market power of trade enterprises in Bulgaria from 2000 to 2021.

The third chapter derives the perspectives in the development of bargaining power of trade enterprises. The convergence and integration of the functions in the retail supply chain are investigated as sources of competitive advantage. It identifies the challenges facing the economic policy for the defence against anti-competitive commercial practices in the supply chain undergoing digital transformation.

The monograph work of Assoc. Prof. Dr Dimitrova researches a substantive academic, scientific and applied problem at a high contemporary level. This work, as well as the other publications put forward for the selective placement process, feature an academic style of writing and employ a clear economic terminology.

In conclusion, it can be summarized that the quantitative, structural and content characteristic of the academic works put forward by Assoc. Prof. Dr Violeta Dimitrova for the selective placement process convincingly meet the requirements as per Art. 118, line 2, sections 3-6 in relation to Art. 129 of the Bylaws for the Development of Academic Staff at the University of Economics - Varna.

6. Identification of the Contributions

The in-depth review of the monograph work by Assoc. Prof. Dr Violeta Dimitrova and the publications put forward for the selective placement process for the appointment to an academic position of "professor" give me grounds **to accept and to reaffirm cogently** the theoretical, methodological, practical and applied as well as educational and methodical contributions that the candidate has correctly formulated. The more significant contributions of each type are as follows:

First Group: Contributions of Scientific and Theoretical nature:

- The works develop and enrich the theory in the field of bargaining power of trade enterprises as a source of competitive advantage.
- They develop further the relationship between the concepts of market power and vertical bargaining power.
- They enrich the economic justification of the relationship between trade and marketing by researching the evolution of distribution product of retailing in times of digital transformation.
- They develop further the theory of assessing the competitiveness of trade enterprises and the sources of competitive advantage.
- They investigate the effects of digitalization on the competition and competitiveness of trade through the impact of e-commerce, the application of blockchain technology, smart contracts, etc.

Second Group: Contributions of Scientific and Methodological Nature:

- The works perfect the existing methodology through the system of indicators for comparative structural analysis of vertically related economic sectors and a system of indicators for the adaptation of Michael Porter's model for the assessment of the competitive structure in trade.



- They extend the application area of the neural network model as one of the applications of artificial intelligence in the field of competitive positioning of retail chains and building consumer trust in e-commerce.
- They substantiate the applicability of the managerial approach of "competitive dynamics" with omni-channel trade.

Third Group: Contributions of Applied Scientific Nature:

- The works affirm the proposed system of indicators for the investigation of the evolution of bargaining power following the example of the trade enterprises in Bulgaria from 2000 to 2021.
- They analyse the impact of digital technologies on the bargaining power of modern trade enterprises.
- They research the competitiveness of trade as an economic sector and its contribution to the economic development of the country in comparison to the countries in the European Union.
- They examine the differences in the labour productivity as one of the key metrics of the competitiveness of retail trade in Bulgaria in comparison to countries in Central and Eastern Europe.
- They study the competitive behaviour of trade enterprises through the method of competitive dynamics in times of digitalization and in an omni-channel environment.

Fourth Group: Contributions of Educational and Methodical Nature:

The candidate has developed study materials and methodological guides, test questions and case studies in the fields of:

- Competition and competitiveness, the types of competition, competitive structure, assessment of the competitive positions, sources of competitive advantage, competitive strategies, competitive dynamics, etc.;
- Operations management as a source of competitive advantage;
- Sales as an objective and an outcome of commercial activity, the sales management and the product range, the policy regarding the trademark etc.

In conclusion, it can be summarized that by engaging in academic research, academic methodology and teaching, Assoc. Prof. Dr Violeta Dimitrova **has created and developed an area of academic research** for the study of competition and competitiveness of trade.

A check made regarding the number of citations the publications of the candidate have received reveals that there are 46 citations of the academic works of Assoc. Prof. Dr Dimitrova, 4 of which are cited in academic publications that are peer-reviewed and indexed in the world-known databases of academic information (Scopus).

7. Participation in Scientific Projects and Scientific Forums



Assoc. Prof. Dr Violeta Dimitrova has participated in 10 academic projects which subject matter is related to the topic of the selective placement process. She was the manager of 5 of these projects. Five of the projects comprise applied scientific research the outcomes of which are reported in academic publications, including in 5 monographs. The candidate has participated in two organizational committees of scientific forums as a leader and as a team member respectively.

An expression of the academic research community's recognition of the candidate is the candidate's membership in 4 editorial boards, 2 of which of foreign academic journals. For 4 years, the candidate was also the deputy editor of the Yearbook of the University of Economics -Varna.

8. Teaching Activity

The teaching activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr Violeta Dimitrova comprises 6 disciplines for the Bachelor educational and qualification degree, 4 disciplines for the Master educational and qualification degree and 2 disciplines for the Doctoral Program in Economics and Management (Trade). As part of the provision of educational materials, the candidate has co-authored 2 university textbooks and 4 university teaching aids. The candidate has been the advisor of 4 doctoral students and co-advises 1 doctoral student in the PhD Program "Economics and Management (Commerce)" of which one student defended successfully, 3 PhD students have completed their studies with the right to defence, and 1 student is in the process of education. The candidate is the leader of 4 scientific projects to support the work of PhD students on their doctoral dissertations. Assoc. Prof. Dr Dimitrova is a member of state examination boards and the examination boards to doctoral programs.

To support the academic research activity of the students, the candidate has participated in the launch and the organization of the annual Student Scientific Conference in the department. Assoc. Prof. Dr Dimitrova is the manager of the "Trade 2030" scientific project involving PhD students, as well as the advisor and reviewer of numerous graduating students in the Bachelor and Master programs. Assoc. Prof. Dr Dimitrova participates in 6 educational projects some of which are international and was an academic mentor in the "Student Practices" project. The candidate is a member of the work group in an international academic network "Civil Society of Consumers (CCN)" with the participation of representatives from 37 countries.

Assoc. Prof. Dr Dimitrova actively participates in the Erasmus and Erasmus+ programs by reading lectures and giving tutorials in English in the educational discipline "Strategic Retail Management" to students enrolling in the university.

9. Miscellaneous

During her professional development, Assoc. Prof. Dr Violeta Dimitrova has held a series of managerial positions such as: Chair and Deputy Chair of the General Assembly of the University of Economics - Varna; Vice Rector of International Cooperation and public relations and also in charge of the project work at the university, Head of Department "Economics and Management of Commerce and Services",



Deputy Director of the Academic Research Institute at the University of Economics - Varna; Director of the College of Tourism - Varna to the University of Economics - Varna; Deputy Director of the Master Degree Centre at the University of Economics - Varna; member of the Academic Council at the University of Economics - Varna since 2003 until now.

Assoc. Prof. Dr Dimitrova was a member of the Board of Governors of the Territorial Organization of the Scientific and Technical Union (STU) Varna; a member of the panel of experts to the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency regarding accreditation with respect to professional area 3.8. Economics. The candidate works as a consultant to the Regional Cooperative Union Varna and currently is a member of the Control Board of the Territorial Organization of the Scientific and Technical Union (STU) Varna as well as of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria.

10. Plagiarism

There is no evidence of plagiarism, the use of incorrect data or the incorrect referral to the academic works by others in the publications put forward for the selective placement process.

11. Questions to the candidate.

In connection to the research by the candidate on the issues of regulating the relations between the participants in the retail supply chain, could the candidate express their personal views regarding the proposals discussed in the public space about a ceiling to the markups on some products in the retail trade?

12. Critical Comments and Recommendations to the candidate.

I have no specific critical comments to the candidate, just the recommendation to continue the work with the doctoral students with the objective of successfully defended dissertations.

13. Conclusion

In conclusion, after the thorough quantitative, structural and qualitative assessment of the materials put forward by the candidate for the selective placement process, the undisputed scientific contributions, the numerous participations in scientific projects and scientific forums, the teaching activity and the demonstrated professionalism bear witness to the fact that Assoc. Prof. Dr Violeta Dimitrova meets and considerably exceeds both the minimal national requirements regarding the academic position of "professor" in the field of higher education in which the selective placement process is announced, as per Art. 2b, lines 2 and 3 of LDASRB, as well as the additional quantitative requirements as per Art. 118 (2), section 6 of the Bylaws for the Development of Academic Staff of the University of Economics - Varna on the grounds of Art. 2b, lines 2 and 3 of LDASRB.



ИКОНОМИЧЕСКИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ – ВАРНА

СЕРТИФИЦИРАНА СИСТЕМА ЗА УПРАВЛЕНИЕ НА КАЧЕСТВОТО ISO 9001:2015

9002 Варна • бул. "Княз Борис I" 77 • Телефон 052 643 360 • Телефакс 052 643 365 • www.ue-varna.bg

On the grounds of the aforementioned, I cogently propose to the esteemed members of the Scientific Jury to decide **"FOR" appointing** Assoc. Prof. Dr Violeta Dimitrova **to the academic position of "professor"** in the area of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional area 3.8. Economics, scientific speciality "Economics and Management (Competitiveness of Enterprises in the Trade Industry)" at the University of Economics - Varna.

March 01, 2025

Sofia

Member of the Academic Board:.....

(Assoc. Prof. Dr Ivanka Nikolova)

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

OPINION

on granting the academic rank of "Professor" in the field 3.8. Economics, program field "Economics and Management (Competitiveness of Enterprise in Commerce)"

by Associate Professor Tamara Peneva Todorova, professional field 3.8 "Economics," program field "Economics" with the American University in Bulgaria

regarding the research, teaching and academic achievements of Violeta Yaneva Dimitrova, Department "Economics and Management of Commerce and Services", University of Economics - Varna

1. General information

Associate Professor Dr. Tamara Peneva Todorova, professional field 3.8 Economics, program field Economics, issues the current opinion on the basis of Order No RD – 06-184/18.12.2024 of the Rector of University of Economics - Varna on appointing academic jury, on the basis of article 4 in relation to article 29a (1) of the Law for the development of academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, article 7 of section 2 and article 123, section 3 of the Rules for the development of academic staff at University of Economics - Varna, decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Economics (protocol № 18/12.12.2024), as well as a Letter informing of the decisions of the first meeting of the academic jury of the search of 4.02.2025.

2. Information on the search

The search for "Professor" is in the field 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8 Economics in the program field "Economics and Management (Competitiveness of the Enterprise in Commerce)." The search has been announced in the State Gazette, issue 100/26.11.2024, for the needs of the Department of Economics and Management of Commerce and Services with the Faculty of Economics at University of Economics - Varna.

3. Applicant for the search

Associate Professor Dr. Violeta Yaneva Dimitrova is the only applicant for the search within the deadline announced in the State Gazette. The documents she submits indicate that the applicant satisfies and exceeds the minimum national requirements for the academic rank of "Professor" in higher education and professional field of the search in accordance with article 2b, sections 2 and 3, of the Law for the development of academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria. Associate Professor Violeta Dimitrova also by far satisfies the additional quantitative requirements in line with article 118 (2), item 6 of the Rules for the development of academic staff of University of Economics – Varna in accordance with article 2b, section 5 of the Law for the development of academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria. Associate Professor Violeta Dimitrova is a member of

the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria and the Regional Organization of the Scientific and Technical Unions in Varna.

4. Information on the applicant

Associate Professor Dr. Violeta Yaneva Dimitrova has been a member of the Department of Economics and Management of Commerce and Services with the Faculty of Economics at the University of Economics – Varna since 1988, that is, more than 36 years. She got her **PhD** in 2000 in the field 05.02.18 Economics and Management (Commerce) with a Diploma № 26942/08.09.2000 issued by the Higher Attestation Committee, Sofia. She attained the academic rank of “Associate Professor” in 2004 in accordance with the requirements of article 118, section 2, items 1 and 2 of the Rules for the development of the academic staff of University of Economics - Varna. Associate Professor Dr. Dimitrova carries out research and teaching in the area of competition and competitiveness of trade enterprises, trade management, sales management, trade operations management and business communications.

5. Description of research

Associate Professor Dr. Violeta Dimitrova has a total of 82 publications, of which 9 monographs, 5 studies and 20 self-authored research articles for the period of her research and teaching activities from 1988 to 2024. She applies for the search of a “Professor“ with 54 publications, in line with article 77, item 3 of the Rules for the development of academic staff at University of Economics - Varna. These publications can be viewed in her author profile in the National Center for Information and Documentation and have been published after her promotion to the rank of “Associate Professor” in 2004. Associate Professor Dr. Violeta Dimitrova has signed a declaration of authenticity for her publications where 5 are monographs (1 is self-authored as a main habilitation work, 1 is a self-authored monograph defended as a doctoral dissertation, and 3 are co-authored monographs), 3 studies (2 Scopus-indexed self-authored ones in English), 12 self-authored articles, 25 research reports (12 of which self-authored, 1 self-authored being indexed in Web of Science and 1 co-authored in Scopus), 2 co-authored textbooks (Violeta Dimitrova is a lead author for 1), 4 co-authored teaching aids (2 of them edited by the applicant), as well as 3 scientific works in the popular press. The citation count shows 46 citations of Violeta Dimitrova’s research, 4 of which are citations in Scopus.

Associate Professor Dr. Violeta Dimitrova works in the realm of competition and competitiveness of trade enterprises, trade as a sector of the economy, bargaining power of trade firms, competitive dynamics, the marketing function as a source of competitive advantage, the effect of digitalization on the output of trade enterprises and competition in the sector of trade, labor productivity as one of the indicators of competitiveness, trade management and that of trade operations. Her publications reflect promptly the theme of the search and have been published after her being promoted to the rank of “Associate Professor.”

Associate Professor Dr. Violeta Dimitrova’s **monograph** titled book “Bargaining power evolution of retail and wholesale enterprises: on the example of trade in consumer products” was

refereed by two referees and published by the Science and Economics Publishing House of University of Economics - Varna, monograph library "Professor Tsani Kalyandzhiev," ISBN 978-954-21-1181-8 after being initially discussed in the Department of Economics and Management of Commerce and Services (Protocol № 7/ 15.01.2024). The monograph consists of three chapters, with conclusions after each item, introduction and ending. It is a complex and complete individual scientific and applied study of the bargaining power of trade enterprises presented through their institutional role in the distribution chain of consumer products and its evolution in the conditions of digitalization. The first chapter is a theoretical summary and critical analysis of the interrelationships among the members of the distribution channel with consumer goods consistent with economic theory and a focus on the institutional environment, marketing and strategic planning. The book investigates the methodological problems of assessing the market power of trade enterprises and makes a careful and well-reasoned identification of indicators for comparative structural analysis of vertically integrated economic sectors as a preliminary stage and a prerequisite for analyzing the bargaining power at the level of mutual contractual relations. In the second chapter the author studies the evolution of bargaining power by use of comparative structural analysis borrowing from the example of wholesalers and retailers of consumer goods in Bulgaria for the period 2000-2021. A relationship is proven between the concentration of vertically integrated economic sectors and the amount of gross income measured with the help of commercial markups. The third chapter discusses the various perspectives in trade enterprises accumulating bargaining power in the conditions of digitalization and emphasizes the challenges before the economic policy for preventing dishonest commercial practices in the distribution chain with consumer goods.

Some of Prof. Violeta Dimitrova's publications present research and results which serve as the basis for the preparation of the monograph. These publications involve the study of gross margin as a measurement of bargaining power (5.4), the relationship between concentration and buying power (11.3), evolution of retail distribution functions in omnichannel environment (13.5.), effect of digitalization on competition in trade (12.4), competition and cooperation among the participants in the value chain (30.10.), interrelationships in the distribution chain with omnichannel retailing (17.9.). Several publications correspond tightly with the theme of the search, namely, competition in trade as an industry (3.2.; 31.11.), the linkages between digitalization and productivity in the retail sector in Bulgaria as a key measurement of competitiveness (15.7.), divergence between labor productivity in trade in Bulgaria and some European countries (6.5.), studying competitive dynamics and the competitive behavior of the distributors of consumer goods (7.6.; 29.9.), dynamics of competitive advantage (9.1.), the connection between the growth of online commerce and competitiveness of trade as an industry (14.6.), inflationary expectations, consumer risk perceptions and instruments of limiting its role as a source of competitive advantage (16.8.).

Associate Professor Dimitrova is the author of two fundamental articles on the market power of the large retailers and food supply chains, more specifically, "Gross Margin and Buyer

Power in Bulgarian Food Retailing” (2017) and “Concentration and Buyer Power in Bulgarian Food Retailing” (2016). The second article comes out in 2016 and poses the essential problem of the huge bargaining power of large retailers with sensitive consumer products such as foodstuffs. These retailers accumulate significant bargaining power and influence which deforms the distribution channel and distorts the pricing of food items for the final consumer nurturing thus inflationary processes. Associate Professor Dimitrova is among the first who explore quantitatively the profit margins and markup of the large food retailers by demonstrating as early as 2017 the big concentration in the sector. She detects a concentration much higher than that in production and wholesaling. By taking over the functions of wholesalers and by aggregating operations through strict organization and the maintenance of large warehouses, the chains concentrate in themselves a large degree of market power which is why the growth of net revenue from sales in retailing exceeds that in production. Dimitrova finds out that the consumer price index for food items is higher than that of a producer which in her view can be interpreted in the context of a stronger bargaining power in the trade with foodstuffs.

Associate Professor Dimitrova senses this effect as early as 2016. She reaffirms her view with the article “Gross Margin and Buyer Power in Bulgarian Food Retailing” which came out a year later. Unfortunately, both articles remain unnoticed and undervalued by the Bulgarian academic community. It is as if by exposing the problem of market power Dimitrova foresees the contemporary outcome. The author has the ability to predict the future and detect essential macroeconomic problems which is a unique talent in economic theory. The very articles quote top neoclassical economists such as Joe Bain, George Stigler, etc. This reveals the author as someone who goes deeply into economics and not just on the surface of commerce as a functional area of business.

The author has participated in a study on the applications of neuron networks, an application of artificial intelligence, in competitive retail positioning (21.1). This is the first such research in the country. The quality of Associate Professor Dimitrova’s publications is strictly scientific both from the linguistic and stylistic point of view. Her works are deeply analytical and argumentative based on statistical analysis.

We conclude that the qualitative and quantitative features of the Dr. Dimitrova’s works satisfy the requirements of article 118, section 2, items 3-6 in relation to article 129 of the Rules for the development of academic staff of the University of Economics - Varna.

6. Identifying author contribution and evaluation of citations

After familiarizing myself with Doctor Violeta Dimitrova’s monograph and other publications I can emphasize her research achievements of theoretical, methodological and applied character as well as contributions to teaching methodology. The first type of achievements gravitates around the study and systematization of the partial theoretical knowledge on bargaining power in the process of market exchange, with a focus on the institutional environment, marketing and strategic planning as well as the effect of digitalization on competition and competitiveness in trade industry. The methodological contributions include the development and improvement of the

existing methodology and system of indicators in comparative structural analysis of vertically integrated economic sectors by analysis of bargaining power through the institutional role of trade as an industrial sector, expanding the application of the neuron network model in the study of competitive positions in trade.

Her applied contributions include studying the evolution of the bargaining power of trade enterprises in Bulgaria for the period 2000-2021, competitiveness of trade as an industrial sector, labor productivity in retailing in Bulgaria and other Central and East European countries, the competitive behavior of trade firms pursuing the method of competitive dynamics in the conditions of digitalization and omnichannel environment. I would like to also stress the achievements with regards to teaching methodology, more specifically, summarizing and clarifying the essence of competition and competitiveness, analyzing the competitive structure of trade as an industrial sector, evaluating the competitive position of the trade firm, the sources of competitive advantage including the management of trade operations as a source of competitive advantage.

The citation count shows 46 citations of Dr. Dimitrova's research, 4 of which in Scopus-indexed sources. The applicant's personal index in Scopus is h 1.

7. Participation in scientific projects and research forums

From her documentation, profile in the National Center for Information and Documentation and the archive on research projects funded by the republican budget with the Research Department and the webpage of University of Economics - Varna it becomes clear that the applicant participated in 11 research projects altogether. Five of those focused on scientific and applied research and resulted in collective monographs. One research project was led by the applicant. Dr. Dimitrova participated in the organizing committee of various research forums. For 3 research conferences the applicant was the leader of the research project, including the jubilee scientific conference commemorating 100 years since the founding of University of Economics - Varna.

Associate Professor Violeta Dimitrova has been a member of 4 editorial boards, 2 of which for international research journals. She has been an associate editor for the Yearbook of University of Economics-Varna and is presently a member of its editorial board.

8. Teaching

Violeta Dimitrova is a full-time associate professor at the Department of Economics and Management of Commerce, presently Department of Economics and Management of Commerce and Services. She has been with the department since 1988, that is, more than 36 years (full-time Assistant Professor since 1988, Chief Assistant Professor since 1997 and an Associate Professor since 2004).

From the reports of the Registrars and the Master Students Office at University of Economics-Varna on her teaching load it becomes clear that in the last 2 years Dr. Dimitrova taught courses in the following disciplines: "Competitiveness of Trade Business" and "Trade Management" for the "Omnichannel Trade Business" major at the master's level, as well as "Competition and Competitiveness," "Trade Management," "Sales Management," "Management

of Trade Operations,” “Marketing,” “Business Communications and Negotiations,” “Business Communications,” and “Sales Management and Advertising” at the bachelor’s level. Dr. Dimitrova contributed to developing curriculum for the majors “Economics and Commerce,” “Business Economics,” “Commodity Science and Customs Activity,” “Insurance and Assurance,” and “Management.” She is a member of the State Exam Committee for the majors “Economics and Commerce” and “Business Economics” at the bachelor’s level and “Trade Business” at the master’s level.

Associate Professor Violeta Dimitrova is a member of the PhD program “Economics and Management (of Commerce)” managed by the Department of Economics and Management of Commerce and Services where she participates with the courses “Trade Marketing and Logistics” and “Organization and Technology of Trade” developing syllabi for those. She advised 4 PhD students and co-advised 1 PhD student. One of those defended successfully the thesis “A Study of the Competitiveness of Firms Trading with First-Hand Automobiles in Bulgaria” on the subject of the doctoral search. Dr. Dimitrova is in charge of 4 research projects aimed at assisting PhD students with their dissertations.

Associate Professor Dr. Violeta Dimitrova is part of the initiation and organization of the annual student research conference. In 2022 she led a research project to assist the student research conference “Commerce 2030.” She was the academic advisor for the project “Student Internships.” She initiates, participates in the organization and was the initial leader of the project “Innovative Partner Network for Sustainable Cooperation between Business and University” within Operational Program “Human Resource Development” 2007-2013. The web-based university-business partner network UEBN is functional and can be viewed on the University of Economics-Varna website. She taught lectures and seminars in the course “Strategic Retail Management” to freshman students as part of the programs Erasmus and Erasmus + in English.

9. Other business

Associate Professor Dr. Violeta Dimitrova has contributed to the success of the University of Economics – Varna with her being part of the leadership of the university. She has been the Chair and Vice-chair of the Academic Assembly of the university, Vice-Rector for International Cooperation and Public Relations in charge of the project activity of the school, Chair of the Department of Economics and Management of Commerce and Services for 12 years, Vice-manager of the Research Institute of the University of Economics - Varna, Manager of the College of Tourism of the University of Economics - Varna for 6 years, Vice-manager for the Center of Master’s Programs at the university and a member of the Academic Council since 2002 up to now.

Dr. Dimitrova has been a member of expert teams of the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency, including the accreditation of professional field 3.8 of the American University in Bulgaria. She spent 8 years as a member of the Regional Organization of the Scientific and Technical Unions in Varna and is currently a member of its Control Board of Directors.

10. Plagiarism

No plagiarism, improper reporting of data or unauthorized use of work by other authors was detected in the materials for the search.

11. Questions to the applicant

How does the applicant see the role of retail private-label brands in the market game?

12. Criticism

I do not find any weaknesses with the applicant and the application. My recommendation is for her to continue developing the theory within the realm of commerce with knowledge from institutional economics.

13. Conclusion

After I familiarized myself with the materials for the search revealing Dr. Dimitrova's research and teaching, I came to the conclusion that the applicant satisfies and by far exceeds the minimum national criteria for the academic rank of "Professor" in higher education and the professional field, as announced in the search, in accordance with article 2b, sections 2 and 3 of Law for the development of academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the additional quantitative requirements, as listed in article 118 (2), item 6 of the Rules for the development of academic staff at University of Economics-Varna. My positive evaluation of her research, publication and teaching activity, as well as my personal interaction with her, allow me to vote positively towards Associate Professor Dr. Violeta Yaneva Dimitrova being promoted to the academic rank of "Professor" in area 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8 Economics, scientific field "Economics and Management (Competitiveness of the Trade Enterprise) at the University of Economics - Varna.

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

March 52025

Blagoevgrad

Member of the Scientific Jury

(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tamara Todorova)