

## SCIENTIFIC STATEMENT

**From:** Assoc. Prof. PhD Krasimir Vladimirov Aleksandrov,  
Professional field 3.9 Tourism, Department of Tourism, AU-Plovdiv

**Regarding:** A competition published in the Official Journal 27/05.04.2022  
for academic position "professor" in "social, economic and law science",  
professional field 3.9 Tourism, University of Economics – Varna

**Grounds for the statement:** Order 06-83/05.05.2022 of Vice rector of EU-Varna for  
determination of the Scientific Jury and decision of the Scientific Jury from  
13.06.2022.

**1. Candidate data.**

Assoc. prof. PhD Velina Ivancheva Kazandjieva is the only candidate. Velina Kazandjieva has graduated High school "Zahari Stoyanov"- Sliven, studying foreign languages. She speaks French, English and Russian languages. In 1995 the candidate has become Master of Science in "International tourism" in UE-Varna. In 2011, Velina Kazandjieva has become PhD with dissertation topic "The impact of e-trade to intermediary activities of tourist agents in Bulgaria". In 2014 the candidate become associated professor in the prof. field 3.9 Tourism, sci. spec. "Economics and management" (Tourism) in Department of Economics and organization of tourism, EU-Varna.

Assoc. prof. PhD Velina Ivancheva Kazandjieva has extensive academical experience, in 1996 she starts lecturing in UE-Varna as an assistant prof. in Department of "Economics and Organization of Tourism". Assoc. prof. PhD Velina Ivancheva Kazandjieva is lecturing couple of subjects in bachelor, master and doctoral education in UE-Varna, also she other universities in Bulgaria and abroad with Erasmus+ program. She is tutor of more than 150 diploma thesis, and six PhD students (three already graduated). Her scientific interest are focused on: Economics and management of tourism, tourist agencies, tourist guides, special forms of tourism, tourism

regulations, e -trade in tourism; Impact of contemporary technologies on tourism development etc.

Assoc. prof. phd Velina Ivancheva Kazandjieva has participated in many scientific projects, including expert position in developing of "Strategy for nature based tourism in NP "Strandzha"", 2014-2020". Presents she has more than 80 publications including 4 monographies (in 3 co-author). Presented candidate data, proofs professionalism and focus on the academic work.

## **2. Quotative and content characteristics of presented scientific work after last procedure.**

Presented materials of assoc. prof. PhD Velina Ivancheva Kazandzieva, are fully correspond with the national requirements for "Professor" according to art.2b, §2,3 of LDAPB, also the requirements of art. 77, p.3, 4, 5, 6 art. 86 of RDAP, University of economics -Varna.

The candidate shows totally 45 publications, like:

1. Singe author publications 23, incl. 1 monography "Concept and opportunity for e-tourism development" Varna, 2021.; one study; eight scientific articles; twelve reports.
2. Co-author publications 22, incl. one monography; two studies; seven scientific articles; five reports; four schoolbooks and educational materials.

According to the candidate's publications report, can be concluded that assoc. prof. Kazandzieva has significant scientific works, including six articles indexed in Scopus and web of science. The candidate make research herself and in a team. The issues discussed in the author's monography are very important, e-tourism and perspectives for e-tourism development in Bulgaria. General assessment has been made for developing digitalization of Bulgarian economy and e-tourism. All candidate's publications show wide specter of scientific interest in the tourism theory and practice. Reflects actual tendences in using digital technologies in tourist travels and destination management. All candidate schoolbooks and educational materials relate to the lectured subjects. The quality and actuality of all research published by the candidate are presented in the citation report. The candidate has 31 citations in Scopus and 20 in Web of science.

### **3. Quantity and quality assessment of teaching activities.**

Presented information by the candidate is matching the requirements of art.77, p.2 according to art.86 of RDAP, University of economics-Varna. Assoc. prof. PhD Velina Kazandzieva is university lecturer with doubtless qualities, she teaches 7 subjects in bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs in UE-Varna. Also, she has taught in other universities including in Latvia and France. Scientific work and educational activities of the candidate are in good synchronous. Tutoring of 150 graduate thesis's and six PhD students, shows excellent teaching and pedagogical qualities of the candidate.

### **4. Identifying scientific contributions.**

In the presented publications can be identified scientific and applied contributions. The themes of the scientific work show clear and deep orientation for issues connected with digital technologies in tourism industry; opportunities for developing of tourist destination Bulgaria using special forms of tourism; management of tourist guiding process; impact of regulation process over development of tourism enterprises. Some of the most consistent contributions can be highlighted:

- Info technologies are basics of digital tourism due to evolution and actual changes of tourism distribution system.
- Future smart projections in the electronic tourism system due to high volume of connectivity of the elements in it and increasing the range of technological and digital applications in the tourism sector.
- Integrated tourism info systems, advantages and disadvantages of the dynamic tourist package, which demand from individual tourist has increased sustainable.
- Opportunities of use smart technologies for destination sustainable development and management of tourist flows.
- Assessment of the mesocosm conditions for developing "National strategy for sustainable tourism development in Bulgaria" 2014-2030.

## 5. Critical remarks and recommendations.

I don't have any critical remarks. I am recommending more participations in international scientific conferences and events, also presenting the scientific-applied result to more stakeholders. Which can be used for policy making for developing of Bulgarian tourism.

## 6. Conclusions

Presented documents from the candidate are fully matching with the requirements of LDAPRB and RDAP in University of economics-Varna for academical position "Professor" in PF 3.9 Tourism. Scientific work of assoc. prof. PhD Velina Kazandzieva is too valuable with a lot of citations. Teaching work is also on high level. Certain contributions are very important for the tourism science and practice. All that is giving me reason to give fully positive decision for awarding Velina Ivancheva Kazandzieva with "Professor" degree in professional field 3.9 Tourism, sci. specialty "Economics and management" (Tourism) in Economics university-Varna.

1.08.2022

Plovdiv

Signature:

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

/assoc. prof. PhD Krasimir Aleksandrov/



9002 Варна, бул. „Княз Борис I“ 77 тел. 052

643 360 • факс 052 643 365 • www.ue-varna.bg

ИКОНОМИЧЕСКИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ - ВАРНА

ИУ - Варна

77, Knyaz Boris I Blvd., 9002 Varna, Bulgaria

Phone+35952643360 • Fax+35952643365 • www.ue-varna.bg

## OPINION

Вх. № 20-935/10.02.2022

by Assoc. Prof. Georgina Lukanova PhD, University of Economics – Varna,  
Assoc. Prof. in PN 3.9. Tourism (Economics and Management),  
Member of a scientific jury for the academic position “Professor”  
in a competition announced by the University of Economics – Varna

### I. General information

The opinion was prepared by Assoc. Prof. Georgina Lukanova PhD, University of Economics – Varna, Faculty of Management, Department of Economics and Organization of Tourism. Grounds for writing the opinion is the participation in the Scientific Jury, determined by order of the Vice-Rector for Scientific and Research activities at the University of Economics - Varna No-06-83/05.05.2022, and along with the decision of a meeting of the Scientific Jury, held on June 13, 2022.

The only candidate in the competition for the academic position of “Professor” is Assoc. Prof. Dr. Velina Ivancheva Kazandzhieva, lecturer in the Department of “Economics and Organization of Tourism” at IU-Varna.

### II. Quantitative and substantial characteristics of the presented scientific works after the last procedure

After the review of the publications presented by Assoc. Dr. Velina Kazandzhieva for participation in the competition, the relevant findings could be stated as follows:

- 45 publications with a total volume of 1212 pages were presented.
- Quantitatively, the distribution of publications is presented as follows: 1 individual monograph theses - 271 pages, participation in 3 collective monographs theses with 224 pages, 1 individual scientific study - 30 pages and 2 co-authored scientific studies with personal participation of 27 pages, 8 individual scientific articles in a total volume of 116 pages and 7 co-authored articles with personal participation

of 50 pages, 18 conference papers, 13 of which individual publications (164 pages) and 5 co-authored (31 pages), participation in 4 textbooks (2 textbooks and 2 teaching manuals) with 282 pages and participation in the Municipal Development Program – 17 pages.

➤ According to the attached Reference-Declaration on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position "Professor" in the field of higher education 3. "Social, economic and legal sciences", according to Art. 2b, paras. 2 and 3 of the Law for Development of Academic Staff in Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), in groups B and D Assoc. Prof. Velina Kazandzhieva collects a total of 537.4 points having in mind the reference minimum of 300 points.

➤ In terms of structure, monographs theses, scientific studies, articles and conference papers predominate (74% according to the number of pages), which is a positive assessment of the quality of the candidate's research activity.

➤ In terms of content, predominate scientific works that are oriented towards current problems related to digitalization and the application of innovative technologies in tourism. Some of the publications are related to the development of alternative forms of tourism such as ecological, educational, youth, volunteer, cultural, "slow" tourism, etc. The thematic orientation of the publications is a testimony to the candidate's diverse research interests, which are not indiscriminately targeted, but are focused on one global topic, which allows its comprehensive and in-depth study.

➤ The deposited publications are both individually created and developed in co-authorship, which can be evaluated as positive in the context of teamwork.

➤ 3 of the publications have been published in journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, and the majority of the remaining publications have been published in journals indexed in international databases such as RePEc, CEEOL, Google Scholar, Scientific Online Resource System, RINC, etc. and have been included in the National Reference List.

➤ All publications have an ISBN or ISSN and are available for reading.

➤ No plagiarism was found in the presented scientific works.

➤ Not a single work replicates those for acquiring the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" and for occupying the academic position "associate professor".

➤ The monographic work, which was submitted for participation in the competition (Kazandzhieva, V. 2021. *Concept and opportunities for the development of e-tourism*. Varna: Science and economics (Bibl. Prof. Tsani Kalyandzhiev; vol. 67) is an individually composed study on a high scientific level, dedicated to an actual and significant scientific-applied problem related to the digital transformation of the tourism industry. With the necessary thoroughness, systematization and scientific-empirical argumentation, the relevant theoretical and empirical summaries and practically oriented solutions were made. The scientific work was discussed in the Department of Economics and organization of tourism, it was reviewed by Prof. Dr. Tanya Dubeva and Prof. Dr. Plamen Iliev, it was published by the University Publishing House of IU-Varna "Science and Economy", monographic library "Tsani Kalyandzhiev". The description made shows that there is full compliance with the requirements of Article 86 (2) of the Rules for Development of Academic Staff at University of Economics – Varna (RDASUEV).

The stated circumstances show that the presented scientific works of the candidate are completely sufficient in volume and relevant in terms of structure and content of the announced competition.

### **III. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of teaching activity**

The documents presented in the academic competition show that Assoc. Prof. Velina Kazandzhieva is recognized as a respected lecturer with a long teaching experience in the Department of Economics and Organization of Tourism at IU-Varna.

According to the attached report, the work load of the candidate for the last two years was 863 hours of lectures (without being converted in seminars) in Bachelor's and Master's degree, in disciplines such as Travel Agencies and transport in tourism, Introduction to tourism, Tourism guiding, E-business in tourism, Regulation of international tourism business, Tour operator, agency and transport activities in tourism, Academic studies. Part of the listed lecture courses have been led by Assoc.

Prof. Kazandzhieva in Russian language. In 2011 and 2013, Velina Kazandzhieva led lectures at the Higher School of Economics and Management at the University of Strasbourg and the University of Latvia in Riga under the Erasmus program. She enriches her teaching experience as a guest lecturer in the Center for vocational training at UE-Varna (2013 - 2015) and in the Center for vocational training "Knowledge and Business" (2017 - 2020).

From the attached list of scientific works, it is clear that Assoc. Prof. Velina Kazandzhieva participated in the development of 2 textbooks and 2 teaching manuals (a total of 12 textbooks and teaching manuals for her entire teaching experience), which are used by the students in Bachelor's and Master's degree. She also participated in the development of a number of curricula for university courses.

Since 2016, Assoc. Prof. Velina Kazandzhieva has been a scientific advisor of six PhD candidates, three of whom have successfully defended their doctoral programs. Assoc. Prof. Velina Kazandzhieva has four publications co-authored with doctoral students and has led four projects for the development of empirical parts of doctoral dissertations. During the years of her teaching activity, Assoc. Professor Kazandzhieva registered scientific supervision of more than 150 theses and master's theses.

The general finding that can be made regarding the teaching activity of Assoc. Prof. Velina Kazandzhieva is that her educational-methodical and teaching activity as an academic teacher, author of lecture courses and curricula, textbooks and teaching manuals, supervisor of graduates and doctoral students, in terms of quantity, quality and structure, fully meet the normative requirements for occupying the academic position of "Professor".

#### **IV. Evaluation of scientific and research contributions**

##### **1. Participation in research projects**

From the attached documents for participation in the competition, it is clear that Associate Professor Kazandzhieva participated in five research projects, successfully managing one of them. She also participated in the development of three projects of programs and strategies for the development of tourism at the national and



regional level. These participations are a real proof of scientific applied commitment and efforts to transfer academic experience, expertise and research results in a real socio-economic environment.

## **2. Scientific contributions**

The specific results of the scientific and publishing activity of Assoc. Prof. Velina Kazandzhieva, which have the character of scientific and scientific-applied contributions, can be summarized in the following more important directions:

- ✓ a complex scientific-theoretical and scientific-applied study of the peculiarities and modern transformations in the tourism system as a result of digitalization and the application of smart technologies;
- ✓ study of the features and modern opportunities for development of alternative forms of tourism in Bulgaria such as ecological and nature-friendly, incentive, educational, youth, voluntary, cultural, creative, spa and wellness, slow tourism;
- ✓ theoretical and scientific-applied study of tour guiding in Bulgaria, the preparation and organization of interpretive tourist routes;
- ✓ theoretical and scientific-applied study of the instruments for regulation of the international tourist business: legal and social regulators; tax and other fiscal regulators; currency, customs, visa and other regimes.

## **3. Citations**

According to the presented citation report, the candidate's scientific works are cited 161 times, 31 of which are in publications indexed in Scopus. This is a clear evidence for the visibility and significance of the publications of Assoc. Prof. Velina Kazandzhieva.

Based on the above information a high rating grade can be given to the scientific and the scientific-applied contributions of the candidate. The contributions can be estimated as significant, real and enriching the existing theory and practice.

**V. Extent of relevance with the minimal national requirements (MNR) according to the Law for Development of Academic Staff in Republic of Bulgaria and**

**the minimum university requirements (MUR) for a "Professor" according the Rules for Development of Academic Staff at University of Economics – Varna**

The scientific and publishing activity of Assoc. Prof. Velina Kazandzhieva can be quantitatively summarized in accordance with the MNR for "professor" in the field of higher education 3. "Social, economic and legal sciences (Table 1) and the MUR in UE-Varna (Table 2) as follows:

Table 1

**MNR for "professor" at PN 3.9 Tourism according to the LDASRB**

Indicators	MNR according to DASRB	Points of Assoc. Prof. Velina Kazandzhieva
A	50	50
Б	-	-
B	100	100
Г	200	437,4
Д	100	380
E	100	270

Table 2

**MUR for a "Professor" according the RDASUEV**

№	Indicators	MUR according RDASUEV	Points of Assoc. Prof. Velina Kazandzhieva
1	Conference papers	60	139,1
2	Scientific articles and scientific studies	115	135,8
3	Publications in Scopus and/or Web of Science	30	67,5
4	Citations in Scopus and/or Web of Science	15	465
5	Successfully defended doctoral students	40	120
6	Research projects (participation and/or management)	15	135

I believe that, in their entirety, the results of the scientific research activity of Assoc. Velina Kazandzhieva confirm the fulfillment of the requirements of LDASRB and RDASUEV for the academic position "professor" under PN 3.9. Tourism as the candidate's points repeatedly exceed both the MNR according to LDASRB and the MUR for the academic position of "professor" at UE-Varna.

## VI. Critical remarks and recommendations

I would like to recommend Assoc. Prof. Velina Kazandzhieva to focus her efforts at:

- continuation of her successful work with doctoral students;
- strengthening her cooperation and publication activity with researchers from other universities in the country and abroad.

## VII. Conclusion

The careful review of the competition materials and the scientific works of the candidate, Assoc. Prof. Velina Kazandzhieva, shows that there is a full compliance with the requirements of the LDASRB and RDASUEV. My acquaintance with the presented documentation and scientific publications and my **positive assessment** of their relevance, content and qualitative significance are reasonable grounds for **my explicit recommendation to** the Scientific Jury to make the decision that Assoc. Prof. Velina Kazandzhieva be elected for the position of AD "Professor" under PN 3.9. Tourism, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Tourism)".

August 13, 2022

Varna

Sincerely,

(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Georgina Lukanova)

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

## STANDPOINT

Prepared by: **Prof. Dr. Lina Georgieva Anastassova, Burgas Free University, Scientific Specialty "Marketing"**

Subject: competition for a professorship in professional field 3.9 Tourism, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Tourism)", announced in the State Gazette of Bulgaria no. 27/05/04/2022

**Reason for writing the Standpoint:** The competition has been announced for the needs of the "Economics and Organization of Tourism" Department, University of Economics - Varna and I participate with an opinion according to Order RD-06-83/05.05.2022 of the Rector of the University of Economics, Varna.

### 1. Brief information about the candidates for the competition

The only candidate in the competition for the position of professor in professional field 3.9 Tourism, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Tourism)" is Associate Professor Dr. Velina Ivancheva Kazandzhieva. She graduated with a Master's degree, specialization "Tourism" at the University of Economics - Varna in 1995. During the period 2008-2011, Associate Professor Kazandzhieva was a doctoral student of independent training at the Department of "Economics and Organization of Tourism" of the same university. In 2014, the candidate of the competition obtained his habilitation and was appointed as an associate professor in professional field 3.9 Tourism, scientific specialty 05.02.18. "Economics and Management" (Tourism).

During the years from 2014 to the present, Associate Professor Kazandzhieva has taught a total of 7 different disciplines in the bachelor's and master's degrees of the "Economics and Organization of Tourism" department. In addition to long-term teaching activity at the university, Assoc. Professor Kazandzhieva was also the supervisor of six doctoral students, including three who have successfully defended their thesis and two are in the process of dissertation preparation.

Associate Professor Dr. Velina Kazandzhieva has a very good command of English, French and Russian, which helps her to read the original of various international publications and to write and publish articles and other academic literature in these languages.

### 2. Fulfillment of the normative requirements for occupying the academic position "professor"

The candidate for the competition, Associate Professor Velina Kazandzhieva, submitted in her set of documents a Reference-Declaration regarding the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position of "Professor" in the field of higher education 3. "Social, Economic and Legal Sciences", according to Art. 2b, paragraph 2 and 3 of the Law for Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB). It should be noted that according to the reference and other submitted documents related to the individual groups of indicators, Assoc. Dr. Velina Kazandzhieva has fulfilled the minimum national requirements for 3 groups of indicators, as follows: Group of indicators "D" - more than 2 times the requirement, group of indicators "D" - overperformance by 1.9 times and group of indicators "E" - overperformance by 2.7 times, which indicates that the candidate significantly exceeds the normative requirements for the academic position "professor" according to Art. 2b, paras. 2 and 3 of ZRASRB.

### **3. Evaluation of the educational and teaching activity of Assoc. Dr. Velina Kazandzhieva**

According to the reference submitted by the candidate to the "Educational Activities and Students" department, Associate Professor Kazandzhieva has taught a total of 7 different disciplines in the bachelor's and master's degrees of the "Economics and Organization of Tourism" department in the last 2 academic years, namely: Introduction to Tourism, Travel agency, and transport activities in tourism, Regulation of international tourism business and Academic research in tourism. The candidate's audit workload for the competition for the last 2 academic years is as follows: 2019/2020 - bachelor's degree - 219 hours and master's degree - 165 hours; 2020/2021 - bachelor's degree - 224 hours and master's degree - 255 hours. The total classroom occupancy for the two consecutive years is 863 classroom hours.

During the last 5 years, the candidate for the competition has developed several study programs and lecture courses in various disciplines, namely in 2016 a study program and lecture course on "Electronic Business in Tourism" was developed, elective discipline in the specialty "Tourism"- "Bachelor" degree, and in 2021 a curriculum was developed in "Digitalization in Tourism", elective discipline in the specialty "Tourism"- "Bachelor" degree.

According to the information presented, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Velina Kazandzhieva is an associate professor in professional direction 3.9 Tourism, scientific specialty 05.02.18. "Economics and Management" (Tourism) from May 2014. Over the past 8 years, she has been the supervisor of 150 graduate students and the supervisor of six doctoral students, including three who have successfully defended their theses and two are in the process of finalizing their dissertations.

### **4. Evaluation of the candidate's scientific publications and research activities**

An important component of the academic activity of a university teacher is his scientific output and his research and publication activity.

The total number of publications of the candidate under the competition for the period 1997 - 2021 is 79, of which 45 after the doctorate, including: 4 monographs (3 co-authored); 3 studies (2 co-authored); 15 scientific articles (7 co-authored); 17 scientific reports (5 co-authored); 4 textbooks and study aids (co-authored); 2 pcs. etc. publications (1 co-authored).

The review of Assoc. Professor Kazandzhieva's publications shows that they are thorough knowledge in the thematic areas of her scientific interests, and the style is scholarly, but at the same time clear and precise, and in addition, the author's personal opinion is always felt, which makes the publications easy to read.

**A more detailed review of the scientific publications' content** of Associate Professor Dr. Velina Kazandzhieva indicates that the main thematic directions in her research and publication activity are four, and more precisely:

- Digital transformations in tourism and applied aspects of blockchain technology in the tourism industry; The candidate of the competition very well represents the characteristics, possibilities of the blockchain technology and its potential for application in tourism and more precisely for: determining the identity of the passenger and tracking his luggage; personalization, reservations and sales of travel services; bonus systems and discounts; data and profile protection, etc.

- Customer attitudes towards technological innovations, including to robots in hospitality and tourism; Attitudes of Bulgarian customers towards technological changes in the hotel sector; The leading components in the structure of attitudes towards robots, the connections and interactions between individual elements united in a common system are defined. One of the publications contains an important study indicating, that the implementation of technological innovations in Bulgarian hotels is at an early stage, and the attitudes of customers are still too vague and hesitant. Full automation and robotization in hospitality is rejected by a significant number of respondents. Their attitude towards a combination of technological innovation and real human service is positive.

- Possibilities for the development of e-tourism; In this thematic direction of the candidate's publications in the contest, the monograph "Concept and opportunities for the development of e-tourism" is very valuable, in which Associate Professor Kazandzhieva defines the essence of e-tourism as a synergy of tourism, technology and the Internet and are presented the opportunities and challenges of the application of artificial intelligence, virtual reality and blockchain in e-tourism. A general description of online tourist consumption is made and the digital user as a subject of the e-tourism system is characterized. The author also analyzes the features of e-destinations, and good practices of digital tourist places are also presented.

- Status of different types of tourism in Bulgaria – presents analytical data review of ecological tourism, cultural tourism, educational and volunteer tourism in Bulgaria.

## Participation in research projects

The fact that, according to the presented documents, Assoc. Dr. Velina Kazandzhieva participated in 8 research projects for the period from 2014 to 2022, of which she was the head of 1, and was a member of the team of the others or a tourism expert. The projects are related to programs for the development of tourism in a given municipality, research into the competitiveness of the municipality of Varna, application of innovative technologies in hotel services, sustainable management, and organization of the Strandzha Nature Park, etc.

## 5. Summary evaluation of the main scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the candidate

After a thorough review of the scientific publications submitted for review and the applicant's opinion about the contributions, I can state that I accept without any doubts the following 6 scientific and scientific-applied contributions, grouping them as follows - 4 scientific and 2 scientific-applied contributions:

### Scientific contributions

**First:** a completed scientific-theoretical and scientific-applied study of the peculiarities and modern transformations in the tourism system as a result of the widespread use of technology and digitalization in the tourism industry. More specifically, the information and technological foundations of e-tourism are defined in this direction

**Second:** contemporary changes and challenges, as well as opportunities for the development of ecological and nature-friendly tourism in Bulgaria, have been studied; incentive travel programs; educational and youth tourism; the concepts of "slow" and volunteer tourism; cultural and creative tourism; spa and wellness tourism vacations.

**Third,** theoretical and scientific-applied study of tour guiding in Bulgaria, the preparation and organization of interpretive tourist routes.

**Fourth,** theoretical and scientific-applied study of instruments for regulating international tourism business: legal and social regulators; tax and other fiscal regulators; currency, customs, visa and other regimes. The mechanisms of their influence are determined and the effects of their impacts on tourism are analyzed.

### Scientific and applied contributions:

**Fifth:** The participation of the tour guide in the management of complaints and taking specific actions for their effective settlement during and after the stay in the tourist destinations has been identified.

**Sixth:** conducted practical-applied research on:

- opportunities for application of smart technologies for sustainable development of the tourist destination and management of the tourist flow;
- research and assessment of customer attitudes and perceptions towards automation of service in tourism and the application of innovative technologies in specific tourist activities;
- assessment of the conditions and factors of the meso-environment when updating the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Tourism in the Republic of Bulgaria 2014-2030;

## 6. Critical notes and recommendations to the candidate

After sharing my opinion and assessment of the overall teaching, research and publication activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. V. Kazandzhieva, I would like to point out that I have no specific critical remarks, but only a recommendation for her:

- To continue and deepen his research in the field of "Digital transformations in tourism" and tourist attitudes towards robotization in the hospitality industry.

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the candidate for the competition, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Velina Kazandzhieva, fully meets the conditions of Article 29, paragraph 1, 2 (a), 3, and 4 of the ZRASRB and the rules of the University of Economics- Varna on the terms and conditions for occupying this academic position. The teaching, research, and publication activities of Assoc. Professor Dr. V. Kazansjjeva presented and positively assessed by me and her high professional qualification in the scientific field in which she teaches, give me the reason to vote with a full conviction for the election of Assoc. Professor Velina Ivancheva Kazandzhieva for the academic position of "professor" in professional field **3.9 Tourism**, scientific specialty **"Economics and Management (Tourism)"**.

27.07. 2022

Developed the opinion:

**Prof. Dr. Lina Anastasova**

Заличена информация съгласно  
ЗЗЛД и регламент (ЕС) 2016/



## OPINION

for the academic position "Full professor" in a professional field 3.9. "Tourism", scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Tourism)"

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

regarding the scientific works, teaching and research activities of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Velina Ivancheva Kazandzhieva, member of the Department of Economics and Organization of Tourism at the "Management" Faculty, University of Economics - Varna

### 1. General information

The opinion is prepared by Full Prof. Dr. Vesselina Dimitrova, professional field 3.8. "Economics", scientific specialty "World Economy and International Economic Relations" based on Order of the Rector of the University of Economics-Varna No. RD 06-83/05.05.2022, based on Art. 4 in connection with Art. 29 a (1) of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, art. 81 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University of Economics-Varna, Decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Management (Protocol No. 33/26.04.2022) and Order of the Rector of the University of Economics-Varna No. RD-14- 141 of 13.10.2021 in connection with the Official announcement in the State Gazette No. 27/05.04.2022 for the competition for the academic position " Full professor" in professional field 3.9. "Tourism", scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Tourism)", as well as based on the Notification letter for the decisions taken from the First official meeting of the Scientific jury on this competition from 13/06/2022 according to Art. 4, para. 8 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, art. 2, para. 5 of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law and Art. 83 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at University of Economics-Varna.

### 2. Competition details

The competition announced in the State Gazette No. 27/05.04.2022 is for the academic position "Full professor" in professional field 3.9. "Tourism", scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Tourism)" according to the needs of the Department of Economics and Organization of Tourism at the Faculty of "Management" at the University of Economics-Varna.

### 3. Candidate for the competition

According to the announced competition, only one candidate has submitted documents within published deadline: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Velina Ivancheva Kazandzhieva. The candidate fulfills the minimum national requirements (quantitative requirements) according to Art. 2b of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva has been working at the University of Economics - Varna as a lecturer in the Department of Economics and Organization of Tourism since 1996. She has a "Ph.D. degree" in Scientific specialty 05.02.18 "Economics and management (Tourism)" from 30/01/2012 and she takes the position of "Associate Professor" in professional field 3.9. Tourism, scientific specialty 05.02.18 "Economics and management (Tourism)" from 26/05/2014. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva is a member of the Varna Tourism Chamber and an honorary member of the Union of Tour Guides in Bulgaria.

**4. Quantitative and other content characteristics of the presented scientific works of the candidate, after the last procedure (compliance with the 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)**

For the whole period of her career starting from 1997 until 2021, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva has in total of 97 publications - mainly proceeding papers and scientific articles. Her h-index in Scopus is 3, and in Web of Science, she has an h-index= 2.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva participated in this competition for the academic position of "Full professor" in the professional field 3.9. "Tourism", scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Tourism)" with 45 publications and with one main monograph according to Art. 77, item 3 of the Regulations for the Development of the academic staff at the University of Economics – Varna. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva has signed a declaration of the authenticity of her scientific works.

The selection of the publications is as follows:

- ✓ 7 monographs and studies (including 5 in co-authorship, and in 3 of them the candidate's participation meets the requirements for independent study);
- ✓ 15 articles (including 5 in English, 1 in Russian, and 7 in co-authorship);
- ✓ 17 proceeding papers (including 4 in English and 5 in co-authorship);
- ✓ 2 didactic books and 2 didactic support manuals (all co-authored);
- ✓ 2 other publications (with a total volume of 32 pages).

The presented publications follow Art. 86 (5), item 1b and item 2 of Regulations for the development of the academic staff at the University of Economics – Varna. All articles and proceeding papers in the Bulgarian language are submitted to the National Reference List. Publications in two journals "Tourism: an international interdisciplinary journal" and "Economic Research of Bulgarian Academy of Science" are inserted in the databases of Web of Science and Scopus. A reference of the candidate's citation list shows 31 Scopus citations and 20 Web of Science citations.

The coverage of publications presented by Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva includes issues of e-tourism, a review of institutional responsibility for the digital transformation of tourism in Bulgaria, proposals for innovative technologies in the hospitality industry, matrices for the behavior of customers and managers in tourism, systematization of interpretive tours for natural friendly tourism (eco-tourism), identification of benefits for the slow tourism, etc. The focus of the publications is Bulgaria, and the studies carried out are based on questionnaires.

The monography of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva entitled "Concept and opportunities for the development of e-tourism" was discussed in the Department of Economics and Organization of Tourism, the University of Economics-Varna (named primary unit) with two independent

reviewers (Protocol 10/29.06.2020). The final monograph was issued in 2021 from the editing house "Science and Economics" of the University of Economics-Varna (Bibl. Prof. Tsani Kalyandzhiev; Book 67) with ISBN - 978-954-21-1062-0. The monograph is divided into four chapters and analyzes the dynamics of e-tourism as well as the determinants of its behavior in digital tourism destinations. It should be noted that a significant percentage of the publications presented in this competition lays down the preparation of the complete monography.

In the first chapter "Information and technological basis of research in e-tourism", the attention is drawn to the stages of application and integration of information technologies in tourism from the 60s of the 20th century up to today; the benefits and difficulties of digitization in tourism are outlined and the digital technologies that are transforming tourism are presented.

In the second chapter "E-tourism: nature, definitions, and development", a theoretical scope of the e-tourism system, a conceptual model of e-tourism, as well as a technology acceptance model (Technology Acceptance Model), and components of smart tourism are included.

In the third chapter "Online consumption and e-destinations in tourism" the external and internal dimensions of digital business in e-destination are examined, the online process of self-organization of a trip is described in detail, is defined by the author the so-called "dynamic travel package" that is integrated into the tourist information system, a comparison is also made between the traditional online reservation system and the dynamic package system.

In the fourth chapter "Guidelines for the development of e-tourism in Bulgaria," an analysis of the opportunities for the development of e-tourism in Bulgaria is presented, incl. SWOT analysis.

It can be summarized that the quantitative and other content characteristics of the presented scientific works after the last procedure, presented by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva is following the 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.

#### **5. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the educational and teaching work (compliance with the requirements of Art. 77, item 2 in connection with Art. 86 of the Regulations for the development of the academic staff at the University of Economics - Varna)**

The teaching activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva covers 5 disciplines in the Bachelor's degree (including those in the Russian language); the Master's degree includes 3 disciplines and only 1 discipline in the Ph.D. degree. As noted in the above-mentioned point 4., Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva is a co-author of didactic books and teaching support materials for the needs of the specialty.

For the period 2016-2021, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva has declared the elaboration of two new curricula. She has also indicated her activity as a part-time teacher outside the University of Economics-Varna. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva was a successful supervisor of 3 Ph.D. candidates and has trained more than 100 students since 2013 in her role as an academic mentor at the University of Economics-Varna, under the Operative Programme "HR Development".

For the last 2 years, the declared and validated total classroom workload of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva amounts to an average of more than 300 hours in both Bachelor's and Master's degrees.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva has participated in 8 research projects as a team member or as an expert. During the period 2016-2018, she is a project leader of a university project for scientific and applied research entitled "Application of innovative technologies in hotel service". She is also the head of 4 projects for empirical parts of Ph.D. theses.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva is an active participant in working groups on accreditation of professional field 3.9. "Tourism", scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Tourism)" at the University of Economics-Varna.

It can be summarized that the quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the educational and teaching work of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva is following the requirements under Art. 77, item 2 in connection with Art. 86 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University of Economics - Varna.

## **6. Identification of scientific contributions of the candidate**

The monography of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva and her publications presented in this competition allow underlining two main groups of contributions with a theoretical and practically-applied nature.

The first group of contributions is related to the elaboration of a conceptual framework of e-tourism with all its dimensions and proposals for future development directions of e-tourism in Bulgaria.

The second group of contributions is related to the research study of different types of tourism in Bulgaria based on projects and self-organized surveys/questionnaires.

## **7. Critical notes**

The first group of critical notes is regarding the monography of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva. The lack of summaries of the author's contributions after each chapter is visible. The e-tourism paradigms derived in Chapter 4 (pp. 238-240) (cited and adapted from Gretzel et al., 2020) can be supplemented, contested, or further argued by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva, as they are currently only statements without added value. It is not clear in which way some concepts brought out in this monography (for example, the ecological footprint) affect e-tourism in Bulgaria.

The second group of critical notes is related to certain terms used in the publications. In itself, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva's formulation of certain types of tourism (for example, "blockchain tourism" in article 8), and types of tourists (for example, "creative tourist" in article 29) is not problematic, despite the divergence between Russian-language and English-language schools or the recognition only by a limited international group of authors of a term such as "creative tourist", e.g. Tan, Kung, Luh since 2013. in "Annals of Tourism Research" or Tan, Luh, Kung from 2014. in Tourism Management. However, it is correct that the wording should not be self-serving, but should be argued by additional information, data and specific statistic related to these terms in the publications, because logically some questions arise such as e.g. what percentage of the country's GDP is blockchain, educational or other type of tourism or e.g. how many creative tourists are there in individual EU countries, etc.?

The critical notes are entirely in a spirit of collegiality and goodwill because these notes are essentially based on already published scientific works, behind which stand up also the names of relevant reviewers.

## 8. Recommendations

My recommendations to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva are in several key directions:

- To guide her accumulated expertise in tourism to adequate practical solutions for tourism in Varna and the region. In this regard, let's pay more attention to the assessments made on the cultural tourism opportunities in the Municipality of Varna, written in article 19, and the ideas related to the competitiveness of the Municipality of Varna as a tourist destination (according to the Bulgarian tourists) written in article 35, which can be revised, updated and proposed for further discussion;
- To use more in her future publications econometric and statistic methods beyond questionnaires, SWOT, or PEST analysis;
- To expand the range of international partnerships in her scientific and research activity.

The recommendations made to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva is all of a wishful nature.

## 9. Conclusion

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Velina Kazandzhieva has the potential to contribute to the values of the University of Economics-Varna and the development of the organizational structure at the University of Economics-Varna when occupying the academic position of "Full professor" in the professional field 3.9. "Tourism", scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Tourism)".

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazandzhieva is a highly disciplined employee; excellently arranged and organized teacher; executive and friendly colleague; recognized expert on tourism in Varna, region, and country; patient, purposeful, and hardworking Bulgarian scientist.

Having comprehensively evaluated both the research and teaching qualities of the candidate for the academic position of "Full professor" Assoc. Ph.D. Velina Kazandzhieva, I express my opinion that her candidacy meets the criteria for this position at the University of Economics-Varna and that in her scientific works there is no legally proven plagiarism.

I propose to the Honored members of the Scientific jury to give the academic title "Full professor" for Assoc. Dr. Velina Ivancheva Kazandzhieva.

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

The opinion is prepared by:

Full Prof. Dr. Vesselina Dimitrova

27.07.2022