

## **STANDPOINT**

by Dr. Valentina Genova Makni,  
Associate Professor at the University of Economics - Varna

of the materials, presented for the participation in the competition  
to occupy the academic position "Associate Professor"  
at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance

in the field of higher education "Social, economic and legal sciences"  
in scientific field 3.8 "Economics" (Marketing and Digital Business).

In the competition for "Associate Professor" published in SG, issue 30/15.04.2022, and on the website of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance (VUZF), Dr. Mihaela Metodieva Mihaylova, part-time lecturer at VUZF – participates as a candidate.

### **1. General description of the procedure and of the candidate**

**By order № 170** of 25.07.2022 of the Rector of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance, I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury for the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at VUZF in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.8. Economics (Marketing and Digital Business).

The only candidate for participation in the announced competition is Dr. Mihaela Metodieva Mihaylova.

The set of electronic materials submitted by the candidate is in accordance with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of VUZF and includes the following documents:

- Application for admission to the competition, Curriculum Vitae, Copy of the diploma for the educational and scientific degree "PhD"
- Monographic work with summary

- List of publications after the defense of the PhD thesis and reference for the contributions in the submitted publications
- Reference for fulfillment of the minimum national requirements
- Reference for participation in scientific projects
- Other documents in accordance with the Regulation for Academic Staff Development in the Higher School of Insurance and Finance (VUZF University).

The candidate has submitted a total of 15 publications, of which: research work qualifying for an academic degree – a monograph, published book, based on her PhD dissertation, articles and papers in non-refereed publications with scientific review (13), including 6 in English. In the necessary groups of indicators, the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor" are fulfilled.

Mihaela Mihaylova has extensive practical experience in the field of business analyses, project management in Information and communication technologies, digitalization and innovative solutions in life insurance and 5 years of experience as a part-time lecturer in the domains of digital marketing and communications, business digitalization and others.

I do not personally know the candidate.

## **2. General characteristics of the applicant's activity**

Dr. Mihaela Mihaylova is the author of scientific publications which outline her profound knowledge within the chosen domain for research as well as her professional and practical experience of many years in the field of digitalization and direct marketing – being presented as scientific validities, concepts, developing methodologies for analysis and empirical evaluation.

The Monograph of the candidate is strongly relevant for the conditions of Covid-19 and a post-pandemic environment, where the circumstances forced companies to be more actively oriented towards one of the most dynamic and economic phenomenon during the last several years – the digitization, encompassed every domain of the economic and social life.

The monograph "Realities and challenges that websites in Bulgaria are facing " consists of six chapters in a total volume of 125 pages. It represents an analysis of the digitalization and Internet presence of a significant number of Bulgarian companies – operating in different sectors, in parallel with the investigation of users' perceptions about websites' usage. This approach provides the author with the opportunity to encompass the process from two

perspectives, when searching and analyzing the common grounds of both types of participants. Based on this and also on the already established theoretical-empirical framework and framework of the research, particular recommendations are given to website owners.

This contribution, along with others, transforms the monograph to a valuable and practical manual for companies relying on a digital presence and applying digital marketing techniques. Beyond controversy, the monograph is actual and contemporary and outlines important conclusions and trends that can serve as valuable empirical resource for any other studies.

### **3. Critical remarks and recommendations**

I do not have significant critical remarks and recommendations to the materials submitted by the candidate. After being profoundly acquainted with the monograph, one question arose - what was the principle applied for sending the two surveys to the target respondents in order to achieve a sample of 100 companies and 200 users, and what approach was used to select the companies covered with a working website?

According to my view of the matter the application of specific statistic methods for dependencies' assessment would further enrich the analysis and the conclusions made.

I would recommend to the author to expand his publication activity in refereed and indexed scientometric databases.

The stated conclusions do not undervalue at all the worthiness of the monograph submitted, which fully corresponds to the characteristics of a profound scientific research.

### **CONCLUSION**

The submitted materials and documents by Dr. Mihaela Mihaylova corresponds to all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria. the Regulations for its implementation and the relevant Regulations of VUZF. I find it reasonable to give my positive assessment to the candidate's potential and capabilities in relation to the announced competition. The combination between the practical experience and the scientific and lecturer's work of the author has a significant effect on the final scientific product.

I agree with the presented theoretical and scientific-applied contributions, which summarize the candidate's scientific aspirations in recent years.

Everything provided and stated confirms my decision to support the appointment of the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance by Dr. Mihaela Mihaylova in the scientific field 3.8 Economics (Marketing and digital business).

20.08.2022

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Associate professor Dr. Valentina Makni