

## OPINION

by prof. Nadia Mironova, Ph.D., at the University of National and World Economy - Sofia  
on the materials submitted for participation in the competition  
to occupy the academic position of PROFESSOR  
of VUZF University - Sofia  
in the area of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional  
field 3.7. Administration and Management (Human Resource Management, Leadership  
and Organizational Change)

By order No. 368 of 10.11.2022. of the Rector of VUZF University, I have been appointed member of the scientific jury of competition for the appointment of the academic position of professor at VUZF; area of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field "3.7. Administration and Management (Human Resource Management, Leadership and Organizational Change)".

In the competition for professor, announced in the State Gazette, no. 52 /05.07.2022 and on the website of VUZF, as the only candidate participating appeared assoc. prof. Teodora Lazarova, Ph.D. from VUZF.

### **1. General presentation of the received materials**

The set of electronic materials presented by assoc. prof. Teodora Lazarova is in accordance with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at VUZF and includes the following documents:

1. Curriculum Vitae (European format);
2. Copy of the diploma for the educational and scientific degree "Philosophiae Doctop";
3. Document certifying the occupied academic position "associate professor";
4. Monograph with summary;
5. List of publications after being appointed dor the academic position of "associate professor";
8. Certificate of criminal record;
9. Certificate of the required experience under Art. 33, para. 1, item 2;
10. Separation protocols for the joint publications;
11. Evidence of supervision of doctoral students;
12. Evidence of leading scientific and other research projects tasks;
13. Reference on the implementation of the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position "professor";
14. Reference to the original scientific contributions in the works and to the citations (without self-citations);
15. Form - consent to the processing of personal data in connection with participation in the competition.

Candidate assoc. prof. Teodora Lazarova has filed a total of 26 (twenty-six) research papers as follows:

- 1 monograph;
- 2 textbooks;
- 1 study aid;
- 22 articles and scientific reports.

All submitted materials are accepted for review.

Documents for acquired certificates and conducted training, for participation and for implemented developments in national and international projects, including for their benefit; as well as information related to the effect obtained by their implementation.

## **2. Brief biographical data of the applicant**

The candidate, Associate Professor Teodora Lazarova, PhD, has extensive practical experience in the field of the management of human resources in both Bulgarian and international organizations.

Prof. Lazarova successfully combines an academic and business career. Her professional experience indicates that she combines practical experience, academic development and teaching practice. Participation in the current competition is an expected step in the candidate's academic development.

The candidate has held successively different positions in the field of human resources management and development. She has a doctorate in psychology from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS), followed by an associate professor's position at VUZF. She has taught at several universities, including VUZF, the University of Sheffield, UNSS, NBU and others. Assoc. prof. Lazarova holds certificates for continuous education and she herself trains public employees

and the private sector in leadership and management, communication and conflict resolution, working in a multicultural environment, motivational strategies, time management, stress management, leadership and group effectiveness, group cohesion, etc.

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

The candidate has submitted a reference for educational and pedagogical activity that corresponds to the requirements of the law and the regulations of VUZF. I accept the reference for scientific contributions in the main monographic work and in the textbooks. The candidate's interest stands out in three separate areas – leadership styles, human resource management and the management of organizational change, as well as the field of scientific knowledge in self-leadership, with the connections with the business practice being brought out.

The main monographic work - "Leadership and Management of Organizational Change" has a volume of 195 standard pages and is divided into three parts. The introduction reveals the author's hypothesis of the research – that the main challenges to the effective human resource management and organizational change are related to 1) criticality of effective leadership in organizations, 2) with the modern business reality, which requires the imposition of non-standard and innovative approaches in the management of human resources to achieve higher levels of motivation, satisfaction and retention of employees, and 3) with the automation of processes and the optimization of teams, it forces leaders to develop and apply management techniques that they have not applied before.

The author poses the question of leadership styles and their importance for the management of human resources and organizational change, paying attention to the need to define the main challenges facing modern leaders, even more so in a situation of global crisis and uncertainty. Examining this issue, the author is looking for the new understanding of effective human resource management and organizational change by looking at all the non-standard approaches, methods, techniques and tools that exist used in modern organizations and by modern leaders and entrepreneurs in order to achieve higher motivation, efficiency and productivity in companies. The research is based on qualitative and comparative analysis.

The first chapter, entitled Leadership Styles and Organizational Management, focuses on fundamental and contemporary leadership theories, examining innovative techniques and practices that would contribute to increasing the effectiveness of the process of management in the organization. Chapter Two, Human Resource Management, emphasizes on the stages of human resource management by analyzing the key factors for long-term motivation and attachment of employees to the company. The author examines in depth the Covid crisis and its impact on human resource management.

Chapter Three - Leadership and Human Resource Management - brings out the main interactions associated with the higher effectiveness of certain leadership styles in different businesses context as well as different organizational dynamics. This part concludes with deliberations on the topic of leadership styles and entrepreneurship. Each part offers conclusions and recommendations for improving the overall process of human resource management and organizational change.

The conclusion summarizes scientific findings, justifications, and inferences, proving the author's thesis.

The monograph proves that assoc. prof. Teodora Lazarova knows the scientific literature and scientific achievements in this field, while at the same time developing the study of leadership at a new, different level by posing questions and a field for discussion. The author makes a comparative analysis and presents to the readers a rich palette of leadership theories and concepts, referring to the traditional theories, but also to the new ones. Citations and used literature are indicated correctly as required. The rich bibliography with up-to-date data from 411 contemporary sources is extremely impressive, which lends reliability and depth to the research.

The applicant provides a significant number of publications and a citation reference exceeding the required points according to the scientometrics reference. An excellent impression is made by the international impact of the candidate's publications, visible in the citation report.

#### **4. Assessment of the candidate's personal contribution**

All scientific works and publications presented for the competition confirm the personal contribution of the candidate to the relevant publications, as well as prove that the value of the formulated contributions and results obtained are her own merit.

#### **5. Critical remarks and recommendations**

The candidate has excellent language skills and shown significant academic practice and development. I recommend publication in foreign journals and those with an indexation in international databases.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The documents and materials presented by assoc. prof. Teodora Lazarova correspond to all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Regulations for the implementation of it and the corresponding Regulations of VUZF.

The candidate in the competition has submitted a significant number of published scientific works

after the materials used for the competition for associate professor. The candidate's works contain original scientific and applied contributions that have received national and international recognition, a representative part of which has been published in journals and scientific volumes published by prestigious academic publishing houses. The theoretical inferences of the candidate's works have practical applicability, as part of them are directly

oriented to the academic work. Assoc. prof. Lazarova's scientific and teaching qualifications are unquestionable.

The results achieved by the candidate in educational and research activities fully comply with the Regulations of VUZF for the application of LDASRB.

After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific works presented in the competition, the analysis of their significance and the scientific, scientific-applied, and applied contributions contained in them, I find it reasonable to give my positive assessment and recommend to the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Academic Council for the election of assoc. prof. Teodora Lazarova for the academic position of "professor" at the VUZF in a professional field "3.7. Administration and Management (Human Resource Management, Leadership and Organizational Change)"

30.11.2022 Prepared the opinion:

Sofia

prof. Nadia Mironova, Ph.D.