

OPINION

by **Professor Sava Hristov Dimov PhD,**
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on the materials submitted for participation in a competition
for the academic position of “Professor”
at the University of Insurance and Finance (VUZF University) - Sofia, Bulgaria

- in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences;
- professional field 3.8. Economics;
- scientific specialty “Finance, Money Circulation, Credit and Insurance (Insurance and Risk Management)”.

In the competition for “Professor”, announced in the Government Gazette, issue 5 of 17.01.2025, pp. 234-235, and on the website of the University of Insurance and Finance, **Associate Professor Irena Nikolova Markova, Doctor of Sciences** from VUZF - Sofia, participated as a candidate.

1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate

a. Regarding the procedure

The procedure for the competition for a “Professor” in the scientific specialty “Finance, monetary circulation, credit and insurance (Insurance and risk management)” at the University of Insurance and Finance is lawful, legally effective and in line with the needs of the School of Higher Education.

– The beneficiary has complied with all legal and regulatory requirements, and Article 40, paragraph 1 of the Regulations on the terms and conditions for holding academic positions at VUZF - Sofia.

– The candidate - Associate Professor Irena Nikolova Markova, doctor of sciences, has submitted 21 documents in conjunction with the publications (21 in total) with which she participates in the competition within the established deadlines.

Associate professor Irena Markova, Doctor of sciences covers all scientometric indicators, including additional ones of the School of Higher Education. (See: References No. 13 and No. 16 of the documents).

b. Regarding the candidate

Associate Professor Irena Nikolova Markova, Doctor of Sciences is a distinguished Bulgarian researcher and university lecturer with a well-established name in the field of insurance science. She has submitted a European format CV, which shows:

– high language proficiency and ability: proficient in Bulgarian, English, French and Russian;

– academic position and scientific degree held, as follows: Associate Professor since 2006, Doctorate of Philosophy or PhD since 2000 and Doctor of Science since 2023;

– education: Secondary - at the 8th Unified Secondary Polytechnic School (ESPU) “Vasil Levski” - Sofia, successor of the 5th Men's High School of Sofia, established in 1937, with extended study of French (1982-1986); Higher - Higher Financial and Economic Institute “Dimitar Apostolov Tsenov” - Svishtov (now D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics), founded in 1936, Finance and Credit Department;

– member of international organizations, particularly the Institute of Research Engineers and Doctors - IRED, USA, editorial board of International Journal of Education and Social Science, Risk Managers Association in Bulgaria (BRIMA) and many others accurately described;

– international certificates: Internal Auditor of Quality Management Systems from International Register of Certified Auditors (IRCA), Intertek Moody Ltd.

It must be recognized that Associate Professor Irena Markova successfully defended her dissertation thesis on May 23, 2023 for the degree of Doctor of Sciences on “Insurance of Environmental Risks in the Corporate Security of the Industrial Enterprise” at the Department of National and Regional Security at the University of National and World Economy (UNWE) - Sofia.

2. General characteristics of the candidate's activities

a. Scientific publications

In the competition for professor, Associate Professor Irena Markova, Doctor of Sciences submitted a total of 21 scientific publications for the period 2006-2025, as follows:

– in Bulgarian language: 17 publications, including one monograph, two distance-learning textbooks, articles and reports;

– in English language: 3 publications, (with numbers II-2; III-7; and III-8);

– in French language: 1 publication (with number IV-18).

Among the mentioned publications, the following stand out:

– the author’s innovative monograph “SPACE INSURANCE (challenges, practices and solutions)”, Publishing House of VUZF “St. Grigoriy Bogoslov”, S., ISBN 978-619-7622-69-0, pages 165;

– “SPACE INSURANCE - INNOVATIONS AND CHALLENGES FOR THE INSURANCE BUSINESS”, published in Business Management Vol. 35, No. 1 (2025), Tsenov Academic Publishing House, Svishtov, pp. 102-118 (pages 17), Indexes by Scopus.

– LE RISQUE “PIRATERIE” DANS LE CHAMP DE L'ASSURANCE MARITIME - PROBLÈMES ET PERSPECTIVES (THE RISK OF “PIRACY” IN THE FIELD OF MARINE INSURANCE - PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES), in ANNUAIRE DE DROIT MARITIME ET OCÉANIQUE, Tome XXXVI - 2018, Center de Droit Maritime et Océanique - Université de Nantes, ISSN: 1259-4962, 497-519 (23).

b. Textbooks and training manuals

– Chapter 14. Accident insurance. co-authored, chapter 15, p. 2.1, p. 3, pp. 252-291 (39) in Draganov, Hr. & Ir. Misheva (2008) Property and personal insurance. Dis-

tance learning textbook. University Publishing House “Economy”, UNWE, Sofia, ISBN: 978-954-494-904-4;

– Chapter 15. Analysis of the financial activity of the insurance company. pp. 278-288 (11) in Draganov, Hr. & B. Iliev, Ir. Misheva, V. Vassilev (2008) Analysis of the activity of the insurance company. Distance learning textbook. University Publishing House “Economy”, UNWE, Sofia, ISBN 978-954-494-928-0.

c. Authored lecture courses

– Fundamentals of insurance;
– Insurance products and insurance market;
– Internal control in the insurance company;
– Investment policy and capital management of the insurance company;
– Applied insurance regulatory risk management;
– Insurance systems in healthcare;
– Management and assessment of cultural and artistic values at the Institute for Postgraduate Qualification, at the University of National and World Economy - Sofia.

d. Scientific reports at international forums

– Misheva, Ir. (2015) Insurance audit as a factor for the effective environmental pollution liability insurance of enterprises with hazardous production. Second International Conference on Advances in Management, Economics and Social Science - MES'15, 18-19 April 2015, Rome, Italy, organized by IRED, USA, published by SEEK Digital Library, ISBN: 978-1-63248-046-0, <http://mes.theired.org>, p. 159-163;

– Misheva, Ir. (2014) Main features and particularities of the environmental pollution liability The Second International Conference on Advances in Social Science Management and Human Behavior - SMHB'14, 25-26 October 2014, Zurich, Switzerland, organized by Institute of Research Engineers and Doctors - IRED, USA, published by SEEK Digital Library, ISBN: 978-1-63248-032-3, p. 168-172;

– Misheva, Ir. (2013) The Insurance Culture - an Indicator for the Dynamics in the Personal Insurance in Bulgaria. International Scientific Conference “Changes in Global Society” held at the European University - Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, on 6-7th June 2013 - PROCEEDINGS, Skopje, June 2013 (www.eurm.edu.mk) ISBN: 978-608-4574-58-3, p. 16.

e. Scientific supervision of PhD students

– Mohamed Aslam Khan (Date of official defense 25.03.2021). Number in the register of NACID: 92108;

– Michaela Stoyanova Monova (22.02.2022). Number in the register of NACID: 94227;

– Rusalin Antonov Rusalinov (1.09.2023). Number in the register of NACID: 97120.

f. Head of a scientific project

– “Marketing analysis of the behavior of users of educational services in the system of higher education in insurance and provision”. Order No. 198/24.11.2010 of the Rector of VUZF Associate Professor Grigoriy Vazov, PhD. Project results: Round table

with the implementation of the project and reporting on the results with the participation of students in June 2021, room 501.

3. Scientific and applied scientific contributions in the publications

The submissions for participation in the competition for a professor are divided into 2 groups:

- Scientific contributions of a theoretical and methodological nature; and
- Scientific and applied contributions.

They can be grouped as follows:

- The insurance market: publications I-1, III-3, III-5, III-6, III-7, III-11;
- Insurance products: publications IV- 14, IV-15, IV-16, IV-17, V-20;
- Corporate governance in insurance: publications IV-14, IV-15, IV-16, IV-17, V-20;
- Innovation policies in insurance: publications II-2, III-8, III-9, III-12. (According to: No.14. Reference on scientific contributions).

In my opinion, **it is imperative to note** that Associate Professor Irena Markova, Doctor of Science is an innovator in the insurance field with 4 significant authorial achievements:

First, the first scientist in our country to investigate in more depth the theoretical and applied aspects of space risk insurance and their impact on the demand and supply of insurance products in space activities.

Second, one of the leading authors of the referenced concept on the necessity and importance of the risk insurance of “piracy activity” in marine insurance.

Third, a recognizable, sought-after and competent international researcher in the application of insurance expertise, independent expert judgment and auditing of quality management systems.

Fourth, one of the few experts in Bulgaria in the field of Management and Evaluation of Cultural and Artistic Values.

4. Critical remarks and recommendations

– I have no serious critical remarks related to the publications of Associate Professor, Doctor of Science Irena Markova. I believe that she is very well adapted in her field of research, having correctly specified her scientific interests.

– I have only one recommendation of a technical nature, namely: in his future scientific research, the candidate for professor should use one of the accepted styles of citation and references, such as APA Style, Harvard Referencing, Chicago Style Citation or the use of their software generators. It is generally not established to indicate merely the relevant links in scientific monographic research and publications.

CONCLUSION

At the final meeting of the scientific jury, I will categorically and unconditionally vote “YES” for the appointment of Associate Professor Irena Nikolova Markova, Doctor of Science to the academic position of Professor in the field of higher education 3. So-

cial, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty “Finance, monetary circulation, credit and insurance” to the University of Insurance and Finance (VUZF University) - Sofia.

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Prepared by:
(Professor Sava Dimov, PhD)