

## OPINION

From: **Prof. Dr. Vania Petrova Ivanova**

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*Professional field 3.8 Economics (Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, International Economics)*

Subject: Competition for the academic position of Professor in 3.8 Economics (Accounting: Corporate Accounting; Application of Information Technologies - in Bulgarian and English) for the needs of the Faculty of Economics, Sofia University.

### **Information about the competition**

The competition was announced in the State Gazette No. 24 of 17.03.2023 for the needs of the Department of Finance and Accounting of the Faculty of Economics. I participate in the composition of the scientific jury of the competition on the basis of the Order RD 38-217/27.04.2023 of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

### **Brief information about the candidates**

Only one candidate, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Eleonora Petrova Stancheva-Todorova participated in the competition. The submitted documents were prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Academic Position of Professor and the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedures for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and the Holding of Academic Positions at Sofia University.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Eleonora Stancheva-Todorova graduated from the ELS in Burgas and then she is a full graduate of the Sofia University. Consecutively, she went through the Bachelor's degree program in Economics, Master's degree program in Macroeconomic Analyses, PhD in Economics(2007) and Associate Professor in the Department of Finance and Accounting since the end of 2014.

She gives lectures on various subjects, all in the field of accounting - introduction to accounting, financial accounting, financial reporting in Bulgarian and English, to students in both Bachelor and Master. She is also a lecturer at AFA Academy, where she teaches International Financial Reporting Standards. Assoc.prof. Eleonora Stancheva-Todorova has participated as a team member and as a supervisor of several university projects.

Both from the acquired educational and scientific degrees and from the rich teaching experience of assoc. prof Stancheva-Todorova's solid preparation and development in the subject of the announced competition is evident.

### **Fulfilling the requirements for the academic position**

According to the report on the fulfilment of the minimum national requirements under Article 26 of the DRRBA for 3.8. Assoc.prof. Dr. Eleonora Stancheva-Todorova repeatedly exceeds the quantitative criteria - with a minimum of 550 she has a hope of 1000 points, as follows:

- Group A indicators - dissertation for the award of PhD - 50 points;
- Group B - habilitation thesis, monograph - 100 points;
- from group D - monograph, incl. which is not presented as the main habilitation work and publications (studies, articles, reports, etc.) in different rank and type of scientific publications - 282.5 points;
- Group E - citations and reviews in scientific publications - 650 points;
- Group F - scientific supervision of PhD students, participation in scientific and applied projects and published textbooks and study guides - 104.5 points.

Separately in the competition materials are also presented participation as a member of a scientific team in 2 (two) and head of 3 (three) scientific research projects funded by the Scientific Research Fund at Sofia University.

All publications and contributions to projects are from the period after 2014 and the acquisition of the scientific title of Associate Professor.

### **Evaluation of the candidate's teaching activity**

The many years of teaching practice and the variety of lecture courses, as well as the large number of lecture hours are an undeniable testimony to the experience, skills and competences of Assoc.prof. Eleonora Stancheva-Todorova as a lecturer and expert in the field of accounting sciences. She has a very good impression of the aspiration for constant renewal

and improvement of the taught material, which is also evident from the participation in various university projects with methodological orientation. The candidate's involvement in the Master's programmes is also evidence of competence and professionalism.

#### **Brief description of the submitted scientific papers/publications**

In the announced competition Assoc.prof. Stancheva-Todorova participated with a total of 23 publications, distributed as follows:

*Monographs* - 2 in English, including one major habilitation work;

*Papers* published in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information - 2 co-authored;

*Papers* published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes - 4, one of them co-authored;

*Articles and reports* published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes - 11, of which two publications were co-authored;

*Study guides* - 4, three of them co-authored.

All but one of the publications and the study guides are in English. This contributes to their internationalization and good citation (evident from the reference of citations), as well as to the international recognition of the author. 12 of the citations are in journals refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information.

It is noteworthy that the majority of the publications of Assoc.prof. Stancheva are individual scientific works and have been published in Bulgarian publications, all listed in the National Reference List of Contemporary Bulgarian Scientific Publications with Scientific Peer Review.

#### **Synthesized assessment of the main scientific and applied contributions of the candidate**

The main thematic areas of the candidate's publication activity can be systematized in three areas:

- of accounting - including transformations in the accounting profession, corporate reporting, accounting education;
- of technological innovation - including the application of new innovative methods and technologies, artificial intelligence, large databases in accounting analysis;

- of sustainability - including sustainability reporting.

The contributions of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Eleonora Stancheva-Todorova for participation in the competition for the academic position "Professor" are defined in two directions - scientific and theoretical and scientific and applied. They fully cover and correspond to the attached publications.

In the spirit of Industry 4.0 and the various transformations in the competencies, functions and importance of the accounting profession, the new requirements and the need to upgrade the traditional knowledge in the accounting profession are presented. The new type of interdisciplinary knowledge and skills that digitalisation and the big data environment require are demonstrated and brought to the fore. At the same time, additional ethical and moral norms are interpreted and justified, integrated into the new conditions of a technology-driven business environment.

An important aspect of the materials submitted for review and a very serious challenge to the professional guild that will lead to changes in the teaching of the disciplines itself is sustainability, its accountability and reporting. Considering the increased and increasingly complex regulations related to green taxonomy in the EU, companies need to adapt and implement these new standards quickly. Accounting experts are expected to take the lead in this process. Highlighting this aspect in the research of Assoc. They are present in several of the scientific publications submitted to the competition (2,3, 7,8 of the list under item 10b).

A serious analysis, not only in a scientific-theoretical sense, but also to a very large extent in a scientific-applied sense, is the critical analysis carried out of the impact of artificial intelligence on the accounting profession. The need for a change in the training of accounting professionals and the integration of artificial intelligence and machine self-learning in this process is justified (Publications 2, 11 and 18 in the list under item 10b).

The contributions in the thematic area related to the potential consequences of the entry of blockchain technology and the change in the activities of accounting departments, the potential problem areas in terms of accounting for cryptocurrency transactions with still unclear or even missing regulations and standards are of a practical and applied nature. These analyses enrich the practice of training future accounting professionals.

#### **Main critical remarks and recommendations**

I recommend increasing publication activity abroad, increasing the share of publications in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information, as well as the publication of a textbook in the increasingly relevant and rapidly developing field of application of digital technologies in the field of accounting analysis.

### **Conclusion**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Eleonora Stancheva-Todorova exceeds the minimum national requirements for holding the academic position of "professor", and in terms of content the subject matter and quality of the publications presented fully covers the field of the announced competition. No unauthorised use of foreign research was found and there was no evidence of plagiarism.

Therefore, I confidently express my positive opinion on the candidacy of Assoc. Prof. **Dr. Eleonora Petrova Stancheva-Todorova** to occupy the academic position "Professor" in the Department of Finance and Accounting of the Faculty of Economics at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

26 June 2023 / Sofia

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