

STATEMENT

By : Prof. Albena Vutsova, "St. Kliment Ohridski" Sofia University

Regarding : the research works of Assoc. Prof. Nadya Velinova-Sokolova for participation in a competition for academic position of "professor" in professional field 3.8. Economics ((Financial reporting and analysis of financial instruments - innovative methods of training in accounting and finance - in Bulgarian and English), announced in SG No. 35/18.04.2023

Reason for review: Order RD 38-272/25.05.2023 of the Rector of "St. Kliment Ohridski" Sofia University and the provision of art. 29 of the Law on the Career Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria

1. Brief introduction of the candidate

Assoc. Prof. Nadia Velinova-Sokolova has a master's degree in Business Administration from the University of National and World Economy - Sofia (1999). In 2005, she defended her doctoral dissertation in the field of financial markets and instruments, information technology, corporate finance.

In 2013, she held the academic position of associate professor at Sofia University, Faculty of Economics

She reads disciplines in the Department of "Finance and Accounting" - "Financial Derivatives tool", "Financial Market Analysis", "Practical Course in Accounting and Finance", "Introduction to Accounting - in English", "Accounting and Finance for Managers" and "Accounting for Insurance Companies". In MA programs she teaches the disciplines "Introduction to Taxation" and "Capital Markets, Derivatives and Risk Management" in English, and in the BA program in English "Accounting, Finance and Digital Applications" and "Insurance" in the BA program "Economics" and finance'

She leads seminar classes at the "Finance and Accounting" department.

She is a part-time teacher at UNWE.

She has very good expertise in finance, financial instruments, financial management and risk management. She has successively held management positions in the Financial Supervision Commission.

There is evidence of participation in various large-scale national projects, there is no clear participation in international projects.

2. General characteristics of the candidate's works

Assoc. Dr. Nadya Verinova-Sokolova is the author and co-author of 35 publication sources, including 31 articles, 24 of which are independent. Three of the publications mentioned are in the database required by law. Two of them are co-authored. The candidate has one independent study (on the basis of a defended dissertation work for awarding the degree of "doctor") , one monograph; one textbook and three study aids.

Prof. Sokolova's citations are 13.1, as follows: 11 citations of one co-authored article visible in the indexed databases; 2 citations of articles from NRS, one of which is co-authored. There are also 3 citations in monographs and peer-reviewed collective volumes.

Two reviews of articles in indexed databases have also been prepared.

For the 2 articles in co-authorship, a protocol separator is attached, with the indicated share of the authors (50% each). For one of the works presented, there is no division protocol. For the three study aids submitted to the applicant's materials, there is also a separation protocol attached.

The publications submitted for participation in the competition do not repeat those for the acquisition of the academic position of "associate professor". With these papers, the candidate meets the minimum national requirements.

As far as I am familiar with the policy of some of the publications, I accept that plagiarism is not detected in the publications submitted for the competition and, of course, I rely on the academic ethics of the candidate.

The candidate's research publications address to some extent two thematic areas - financial markets; financial instruments ; financial risk and modern training methods, respecting the requirements of Industry 4.

In the area of financial markets, instruments and financial risk, problems related to analyzing the requirements for the assessment of financial risks according to the new accounting and financial regulations, existing problems have been identified; application of international financial standards. The New Leasing Standard, IFRS 16, issued by the International Accounting Standards Board (2016), asymmetric accounting models were studied; the impact of IFRS 16 in different industries.

The stand-alone monograph "Education 4.0 and Innovative Techniques in Teaching" ISBN:978-954-07-5414-7 is dedicated to the latest teaching models and techniques, the existing challenges facing higher education institutions in the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The need for research and evaluation of the flipped classroom model in the context of accounting and finance education is analyzed. The presented information on innovative teaching techniques enables a new interpretation of finance and accounting education in higher education institutions, respecting the features of Education 4.0.

The study "Students' Satisfaction with Online Learning and the Challenges of Hybrid Learning", which is in press, examines the option of how hybrid models can be transformed and used in higher education. The primary goal of implementing hybrid learning at some institutions is to enrich the student experience by combining the best features of face-to-face online learning. The effectiveness of the model is measured by students' success in the course and their satisfaction with the teaching system. The impact of technology on financial education in higher education institutions, the challenges faced by students and teachers, and the satisfaction of learning in such a format are examined.

In the article " Leases and its Impact on Company's Financial Reporting, Financial Ratios and Performance Metrics", the effects of IFRS 16 on the lessee's financial statements, financial ratios and key performance indicators are discussed. The implementation of the new accounting rules was discussed, which leads to an increase in leased assets (right-of-use assets) and financial liabilities in the balance sheet of lessees with significant off-balance sheet leases and EBITDA, respectively.

Studies "Management of financial risks through derivative instruments - 1st and 2nd part" Yearbook of the Faculty of Economics are dedicated to the presentation of the main approaches to hedging risk according to the requirements of the International Standard for Financial Reporting 9 - Financial Instruments. The practical application of risk management through derivative financial instruments is examined.

The article "Accounting for credit losses under IFRS 9 - Financial instruments" is related to the presentation of the features of accounting for expected credit losses in the light of the latest accounting requirements and their importance for the process of effective risk management.

"Education 4.0 and Innovative Teaching Techniques" is essentially a presentation of a monograph that examines contemporary models and techniques for teaching in HE with an emphasis on accounting education.

The article "Digitalization in Financial Education in The Universities," presents the impact of digitalization on financial education in universities and analyzes the level of digital financial culture. Emphasis is placed on the practical application of the digital learning process

"Innovative Practices In Higher Education And Covid-19" is a study investigating the relationship between Education 4.0 and innovative practices in teaching, as well as the impact of the pandemic on the educational process in higher education. Research is done in the context of Industry 4, its demands, trends and impact on economic and social life.

The article "Economic challenges in the context of pandemic and war circumstances" examines the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the financial industry, the involvement of green finance in the post-pandemic economic recovery. It examines the existence of causal relationships between green finance and the green economy.

The article "Education 4.0, Artificial Intelligence And Financial Education" examines the relationship between artificial intelligence and financial education, the challenges facing teachers and students in this process and analyzes the level of financial culture in education.

"Digitalization in economics education in universities in Bulgaria - challenges and problems" is an article that explores the impact of how digitalization can make the educational process more accessible and flexible. The need for a "Science-business" connection, guaranteeing quality education, the need for new specific competencies related to the application of digital technologies.

The article, Accounting Education, Accounting Profession and COVID-19, examines the impact of the coronavirus on higher accounting education, the challenges students face in online learning, and an assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on the accounting profession.

"Higher Education and COVID 19 in Conditions of Education 4.0, Industry 4.0 " is a study that examines the use of innovations during the pandemic, the institutional changes that have occurred, the behavior of academics towards this situation and how support networks could be built to support the learning process and the quality of education .

The purpose of the article "Did Students Learn To Study Online?, SMART SPECIALIZATION IN THE DECADE OF BUSINESS CONNECTIVITY TO LOCOMOTION" is to present the challenges facing students in online learning and to determine whether they have acquired the skills to study online.

The article "Education 4.0 And Accounting Education –Challenges, Changes in the Global World and the New Solution", examines the process of student transformation from a passive to an active user with the use of digital technologies. The advantages of new technological approaches and online training are also discussed.

Innovative Methods For Accounting Education - Experience And Global Lessons Learned, is an article resulting from a scientific conference "Sustainable development and socio-economic cohesion in the XXI century. The purpose of this article is to present and explore global experiences and lessons learned in the use of innovative methods in accounting education.

Challenges Regarding in Teaching International Financial Reporting Standards - is an article in the framework of a scientific conference of the University of Varna. It presents the challenges facing educators in teaching IFRS. A three-tiered approach to teaching the specific requirements of IFRS (concepts, principles/rules, judgments required in applying those rules) is proposed and we provide guidance and resources to assist accounting educators.

"The Challenges Of Online Learning On Accounting And Financial Disciplines, Digital Transformation, Media and Inclusion" presents the positive sides of online education in finance and accounting, some of its advantages, including easily accessible learning materials, flexible scheduling, growing academic opportunities and ways to build skills.

"Using modern approaches in teaching the new accounting standards" is an article in the framework of an international scientific conference. It aims to present how the use of modern and innovative teaching approaches and methods will increase the effectiveness of student learning in accounting disciplines.

"The new IFRS 15 and IFRS 16 - challenges for businesses" is a report included in a collection of reports and presents the new requirements of the standards under consideration and indicates the challenges that businesses will face when applying them.

"The new International Financial Reporting Standard 17 and the challenges for insurance companies" is an article that examines some of the challenges that insurance companies will face with the upcoming application of IFRS 17 insurance contracts. The starting point of the study is the new regulations and their potential effect on the insurance sector. The basic changes in the model of accounting of insurance contracts are considered.

The article "Connection Between Simulation Models and Accounting Education, is part of a collection of reports at an international scientific conference. Its purpose is to present and explore the relationship between incentive models and accounting education.

The article "Are Insurance Company Ready for IFRS 17 Implementation?" is also part of a collection of reports at an international scientific conference presenting some of the challenges facing insurance companies arising as a result of the application of the Standard. The new requirements and their future effect on the insurance sector are explored

"Innovative Techniques In Teaching Accounting And Financial Discipline", presents innovative techniques for teaching in accounting and financial disciplines.

"Specifics in risk accounting under the new IFRS 17, Accounting, auditing and finance in a changing world" aims to present the specifics of risk accounting in the management of insurance contracts under IFRS 17, as well as the new specific requirements for analyzing insurance wallets.

"Accounting for credit losses under IFRS 9: Financial instruments". The purpose of the article is to present the features of accounting for expected credit losses in the light of the latest accounting requirements and their importance for the process of effective risk management.

"Accounting Requirements For Capital According To The CRD IV" is part of the Collection of reports "Towards Industry 4.0 - Technology or Ideology". It examines the accounting requirements for capital under CRD IV in the practice of banks.

"Solvency II - challenges facing the Bulgarian insurance market" is a report included in the "Towards Industry 4.0 - Technology or Ideology" Collection of reports, which highlights some of the problems related to the reporting of assets, liabilities and equity according to the new requirements of Solvency II. Emphasis is placed on the assessment of performance, as well as the principles of recognition and measurement applied to all assets and liabilities, in relation to the adequacy of technical reserves of private capital.

"Solvency II - Risk management and accounting" was presented at the international conference "Governance and Strategic Management, (ICGSM) "The Circular Economy", the need for risk assessment models was considered, taking into account risks that have not been previously taken into account in the assessment of capital requirements for insurance companies, with an emphasis on the assessment and accounting of risk in the practice of insurance companies.

3. Concrete significance of contributions for science and practice

The review of the works submitted for the competition by Assoc. Prof. Nadia Sokolova shows that they are in line with research standards.

Based on the obtained results, the candidate formulated four theoretical contributions; two methodological and two practically applied.

From the **theoretical contributions the following could** be accepted:

- Investigating the need for enterprises to develop new methodologies and controls regarding risk assessment in relation to the application of International Financial Reporting Standard 9 - "Financial Instruments" (IFRS 9);

- Outline the main risk hedging approaches.

From the methodological contributions, the following could be accepted:

- Study of the theoretical specifics of the new regulations of IFRS 17 for insurance companies and their potential effect on the insurance sector specifics of higher education in the field of finance and accounting in the conditions of COVID-19.

From the contributions **of a practical nature:**

- The practical aspects of the new requirements of the Solvency II framework have been analyzed in terms of the analysis and assessment of the assets, liabilities and technical reserves of the insurance company, as well as capital requirements according to the framework for capital adequacy of financial institutions (CRD IV). Risk assessment mechanisms and a risk management system are proposed. (Publications 23, 30 and 31 in the list under item 10b).

4. Critical notes, recommendations and questions

I have the following critical notes and recommendations. The first note is related to the way of presenting the materials for the competition. A resettlement protocol is missing for one of the presented works.

The second note refers to the fact that the presented materials create a reference for a migrating scientific focus. On one hand, the field of research is financial instruments, financial risk, etc. from the second - digital education to some extent tied to the study of finance. But in principle, digitization in education is a nationally defined policy, it concerns all areas of learning and implies a general implementation framework. Another question is whether the specificity of a certain research discipline is a priority. I would recommend that the candidate find the right binding environment and orient themselves towards a clear focus. I would also recommend that the candidate publishes more intensively in journals with an impact factor or impact rank. It would be good for the candidate to significantly increase his activity in the field of the project activity and especially in relation to international projects.

5. Conclusion

Regardless of the notes made, the candidate's submitted publications testify to her knowledge of the issues in the field of financial reporting and financial instruments, as well as some specifics of specialized digital training in this area. These are relevant from the point of view of the effects of dynamic economic development and accompanying situations in the context of the current geopolitical framework. The candidate demonstrates good knowledge of theoretical and practical issues and correctness in referencing the publications used. Some of these results have been converted into learning content.

With the works presented in the competition and with her teaching activity, Assoc. Prof. Nadia Velinova-Sokolova demonstrates the qualities of a responsible researcher and teacher.

All of the above gives me reason to recommend the esteemed research jury to award Assoc. Prof. Nadia Sokolova-Velinova the academic position of "professor" in professional direction 3.8. Economics (Financial reporting and analysis of financial instruments - innovative methods of teaching accounting and finance - in Bulgarian and English) at the Faculty of Economics of the "St. Kliment Ohridski".Sofia University.

08/1/2023
Sofia

Reviewer:
Prof. Albena Vutsova