

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Plamen Pavlov, habilitated in professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty “Innovation Management”.

1. The opinion is prepared regarding a competition for the academic position of **associate professor**, in accordance with Order LS № 99 of 15.12.2025 of the Rector of Burgas Free University and a decision of a scientific jury held on 30.12.2025.

2. Information about the competition

The competition for associate professor is in the field of higher education 3. “Social, economic and legal sciences”, professional direction 3.7. “Administration and management” (Human resources management and organizational management), for the needs of Burgas Free University and was announced in DV (the State Gazette) No. 89 of 24.10.2025.

3. Candidates for the competition

Only one candidate is participating in the competition for the academic position of “Associate professor” - Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vilyana Yankova Ruseva, a full-time lecturer at Burgas Free University, Center for Economic and Management Sciences. From the documents provided by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vilyana Yankova Ruseva, it can be stated that she **fulfills** both the requirements specified in Art. 24 of ZRASRB and Art. 1a of PPZRASB, for holding the academic position of “Associate professor”, as well as the additional requirements for holding academic positions at Burgas Free University.

4. Candidate details

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vilyana Yankova Ruseva, graduated from higher education, a bachelor's degree in 2010 with a major in “Finance” and a master's degree in 2012 in “Accounting and Control” at the University of Economics - Varna. In 2016, she obtained a second master's degree at the University “Professor Dr. Asen Zlatarov” in “Tourism Management”.

In 2019, the candidate obtained the ONS “doctor” in 3.8. Economics. “Economics and Management (Industry)”.

From 2019 to the present, Vilyana Yankova Ruseva is an Assistant professor (2019-2021), Senior assistant professor (2021-2023) and from 2023 an Associate professor in 3.8 Economics at the BFU. Since 2021, she has also been a lecturer in entrepreneurship at High School for Romance Languages “G. S. Rakovski” in Burgas. In the years before 2019, Vilyana Ruseva has gained extensive practical experience in the fields of banking and tourism.

The areas of scientific interest of Assoc. Prof. Ruseva are in the field of the announced competition, namely: Human Resources Management, Organizational Management and Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Development, Innovations.

The candidate for the announced competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor” **meets** the requirements of the ZRASRB, PPZRASRB and the additional requirements for holding academic positions at Burgas Free University.

5. Description of scientific works

Vilyana Yankova Ruseva participates in the competition for the academic position of “Associate professor” in the professional field 3.7. “Administration and management” (Human resources management and organizational management) with 16 scientific publications and one independent textbook. The candidate fulfills the requirements under Art. 24 and Art. 2b of the ZRASRB, Art. 53 of the PPZRASRB, as well as the additional requirements for holding the academic position of “associate professor” at the Burgas Free University.

The required number of points to fulfill the minimum national requirements from the Appendix to Art. 1a, para. 1 of the PPZRASRB is 400 points, and the actual fulfillment by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vilyana Yankova Ruseva is 438.8 points, also complying with the additional requirements for holding the academic position of associate professor at the Burgas Free University.

To participate in the competition, the candidate Vilyana Ruseva has submitted:

- A defended dissertation for the acquisition of the ONS “doctor” on the topic “Development of know-how through consulting and training (the example of the tourism industry)” (**50 points** according to the MNI for occupying the academic position of “Associate professor”).

- An independent monograph (main habilitation work) “The integration of sustainable development in human resource management. ESG strategies and employer social responsibility”, published in 2025 by the Burgas Free University Publishing House. The submitted work is 188 pages long.

The monograph consists of six chapters. The initial chapters systematize the theoretical and empirical foundations for the integration of sustainable development and ESG in human resources management. A 15-year period (2010-2025) is examined, with the last five years being put in focus, mainly due to the strengthened regulatory framework and information disclosure practices. On the one hand the concept of sustainable development and its relationship with corporate governance, the role of ESG for investors and stakeholders, and on the other hand the practices and policies related to human resources management, also in the context of sustainable development, are successively examined.

Chapter V examines the good practices of organizations from Europe and Bulgaria. They can be considered as examples of successful implementation of ESG in human resources management, taking into account the specific features of different market and regulatory conditions.

The final chapter presents an analysis of the empirical research conducted in Bulgarian organizations. General trends and regional specificities in the integration of ESG principles in human resource management are outlined.

It should be noted that at the very beginning, some limitations in the study are precisely indicated and the ethical requirements for correct citation and processing of information are met. **(100 points);**

- Published book based on a defended dissertation for the award of an educational and scientific „doctor“ (75 points), one independent chapter of a collective monograph and one chapter of a collective monograph in co-authorship, which are not presented as the main habilitation work (26.3 points), two studies, one of which in co-authorship (22.5 points), 4 articles and reports (in co-authorship), published in refereed and indexed publications (50 points), 6 articles and reports in non-refereed publications with scientific review, including 1 in co-authorship (55 points). **In total**, in the sections reporting publications in the reference for minimum national requirements, the candidate Vilyana Ruseva achieved **(228.8 points)**.

- In terms of content, the publications of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vilyana Ruseva are mainly focused on the field of human resources management, sustainable development, innovation and entrepreneurship.

The candidate's scientific output is characterized by depth, competence and purposefulness. It is noteworthy that over 40% of the publications (in number) are co-authored, which gives reason, on the one hand, to take into account the individual contribution to the scientific achievements of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vilyana Ruseva, and on the other hand, her ability for team scientific work.

6. Identification of contributions

The significant volume of scientific research by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vilyana Ruseva in areas such as human resource management, sustainable organizational management, innovations, etc. have contributed to highlighting a number of significant contributions to theory and practice, namely:

Scientific and theoretical contributions of the participant in the competition:

- A comprehensive theoretical framework for the integration of ESG principles in human resource management has been created, expressed in a developed complex model connecting regulations (CSRD, ESRS, EU Taxonomy), corporate sustainability and HRM functions, taking into account the role of HRM as a strategic carrier of ESG policies (Publication P1 from the list of scientific publications of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vilyana Ruseva).

- In relation to the theory of management consulting, professional training and know-how in organizations, a systematic theoretical apparatus has been formed for the connection between training, consulting, human resource potential and economic efficiency, including modern approaches such as coaching, mentoring, shadowing, etc. (Publication P2).

- The scientific models for innovation, organizational development and digital transformation in SMEs have been enriched, through new interpretations of models such as the Technology Acceptance Model, Design Thinking and Quadruple Helix, in the context of organizational innovations and digital adaptations (Publications P3, P4, P6, P11).

- In relation to the study of organizational culture and social entrepreneurship, a conceptual integration between the models of Shane and the Competing Values Framework and the specificity of community-based enterprises (CBEs) has been reproduced, revealing their role for social sustainability (Publication P10).

- Development of the theoretical foundations of digital learning, e-mentoring and the role of AI in organizational management has been demonstrated through theoretical systematization of online learning, digital competencies (DigComp 2.0), peer mentoring models and AI tools for conflict management and training (Publications P8, P12, P13, P15).

Practical and applied scientific contributions of the participant in the competition:

- Applicable models and indicators for the introduction of ESG strategies in Bulgarian organizations have been developed, and performance indicators, methodological frameworks and applicable approaches to HR practices have been proposed (Publication P1).

- Professional training and consulting have been studied and their role in organizational effectiveness has been proven, combining quantitative and qualitative methods, and recommendations for improving management capacity and educational practices have been developed (Publication P2).

- Practical models for digital platforms, cloud services and training in enterprises have been built, and key factors for the successful implementation of digital educational platforms have been identified and applicable organizational strategies have been formulated (Publications P4, P8, P13).

- Pedagogical solutions for entrepreneurship education and for implementing Design Thinking in education and business have been developed, and models for experiential learning, structured methods for assessing and adapting design thinking as an organizational tool have been proposed (Publications P5 and P11).

- Practical guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence for conflict management and training are proposed, and organizational recommendations for the ethical, effective and strategic application of AI in relation to HRM are formed (Publication P12).

- Policies and solutions for promoting the participation of women in business and entrepreneurship are proposed, and specific measures for institutional, organizational and educational support in this regard are proposed (Publication P14).

The candidate reports a total of 8 citations of works in scientific publications, namely: 2 citations in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information (Scopus or Web of Science, according to a citation report); 2 citations in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review; 4 citations in non-refereed journals with scientific review. They bring the candidate a total of **70 points**, which exceed the minimum requirements of 50 points.

7. Participation in scientific projects and scientific forums

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vilyana Ruseva has participated in a total of 17 international and national projects (according to a report on the fulfillment of the additional requirements of the Center for Economic and Management Sciences at the BFU). It can be safely said that the project participation of the candidate is very serious.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vilyana Ruseva has also participated in 1 mobility in the Kingdom of Belgium.

8. Teaching work

The teaching activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vilyana Ruseva covers courses in the Bachelor's and Master's degree programs in full-time and part-time education, as well as for school education in "Entrepreneurship". The provided reference testifies to the fact that a large part of the disciplines taught by Assoc. Prof. Ruseva are in the field of this competition, namely: "Human Resources Management", "Sustainable Tourism Development", "Strategic Management in Tourism", "Introduction to Entrepreneurship", "Social Entrepreneurship", etc.

For the competition, the candidate Vilyana Ruseva presents 1 textbook – "Human Resources Management".

9. Others

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vilyana Ruseva is the chairwoman of the supervisory board of the Southeastern Union of Tour Guides "Vanya Raykova" and a licensed tour guide at the Ministry of Tourism.

10. Plagiarism

There is no plagiarism proven in accordance with the statutory procedure in the works of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vilyana Ruseva.

11. Questions, critical remarks and recommendations to the candidate

I recommend to the candidate:

- To continue to upgrade the development of her research activities in areas such as human resource management and sustainable organizational management.
- To continue working with young people, motivating them to achieve success both in the field of sustainable and strategic management of companies, and in the scientific field.

12. Conclusion

The analysis of the scientific and teaching activities, based on the documents submitted by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vilyana Yankova Ruseva, as well as her professional experience, show that all the requirements of the ZRASRB and the additional requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate professor" at Burgas Free University have been met.

All this gives reason to recommend to the esteemed members of the scientific jury to support the proposal that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vilyana Yankova Ruseva be approved for holding the

academic position of „associate professor“ in professional field 3.7. „Administration and Management“ (Human Resources Management and Organizational Management)" at Burgas Free University.

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Varna

/Assoc. Dr. Plamen Pavlov/