

OPINION

by

Prof. DSc. Rumiana Russeva Zheleva

*Member of the Scientific Jury in a competition
for the academic position of Associate Professor (Dozent)*

*in Professional Field 3.7. Administration and Management
(Human Resource Management and Organizational Management),*

*announced in the State Gazette, Issue No. 89 of 24 October 2025,
on the grounds of Art. 42, Art. 50(2) and Art. 50(3) of the Act on the Development of the
Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its Implementation, and the
Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of Burgas Free University.*

In compliance with Order LS No. 99 of 15 December 2025 issued by the Rector of Burgas Free University, I participate as a member of the Scientific Jury for the selection of an Associate Professor (Dozent) under the above-mentioned competition. One candidate has submitted documents for participation in the announced competition, namely **Dr. Vilyana Yankova Ruseva**.

1. Presentation of the Candidate

Dr. Vilyana Yankova Ruseva is a university lecturer and researcher in Professional Field 3.8. Economics, who obtained the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in 2019 at Burgas Free University. Her academic development is characterized by consistency and sustained progression: from part-time Assistant (2017–2021), Chief Assistant (2021–2023), to Associate Professor (since 2023). The candidate holds a Bachelor’s degree in Finance (2010), a Master’s degree in Accounting and Control (2012), a Master’s degree in Tourism Management (2016), as well as pedagogical qualification as a Teacher of Economics (2018), which provides a solid educational and methodological foundation for her teaching activities. After obtaining the PhD degree, Dr. Ruseva has accumulated the required teaching experience pursuant to Art. 24(1)(2) of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff, duly certified by Burgas Free University. She delivers lectures and seminars in the fields of marketing, entrepreneurship, human resource management, business planning, and sustainable development, including teaching in an international environment under the Erasmus+ Programme.

2. Personal Characteristics, Compliance with Legal Requirements, and Quantitative Indicators

Dr. Vilyana Yankova Ruseva fully complies with all legal requirements stipulated in the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, as follows:

- She holds the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”, obtained in 2019 in a professional field corresponding to the announced competition;

- She has the required teaching experience after obtaining the PhD degree, pursuant to Art. 24(1)(2) of the Act, certified by Burgas Free University;
- She is employed under a full-time contract at Burgas Free University;
- She has submitted a complete and duly required set of competition documents in accordance with the Regulations for the Implementation of the Act.
- According to the submitted reference materials, the candidate meets and exceeds the minimum national requirements, achieving 448.8 points against a required minimum of 400 points. She also fully complies with the additional institutional requirements adopted by Burgas Free University and the Center for Economic and Management Sciences.

For participation in the competition, the candidate presents a comprehensive and balanced publication corpus, including **one (1) single-author habilitation monograph** (in Bulgarian) and **one (1) book based on her defended doctoral dissertation** (in Bulgarian). In addition, she has submitted **four (4) articles in refereed and indexed scientific journals** (all in English), as well as **six (6) articles and papers in non-refereed but peer-reviewed journals and proceedings**, of which **four are in English and two in Bulgarian**. The candidate also presents **two (2) scientific studies in English** and **two (2) chapters in edited volumes** (one in English and one in Bulgarian). The publications are thematically coherent, do not duplicate the doctoral dissertation, and ensure compliance with and exceeding of the minimum national requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor, while publications in English contribute to the international visibility of Dr. Ruseva's research.

Група от	Съдържание	Изискване	Изпълнение
А	Показател 1. Дисертационен труд за присъждане на образователна и научна	50	50
Б	Показател 2	-	-
В	Показател 3. Хабилитационен труд – монография	100	100
Г	Сума от показателите от 4 до 10	200	228.8
Д	Сума от показателите от 11 до 13	50	70
Е	Сума от показателите от 14 до края	-	-
	Общо	400	448.8

Based on the above, it can be concluded that Dr. Vilyana Yankova Ruseva fully complies with the legal requirements under the Act, meets and exceeds the minimum national requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor, and fully satisfies the additional requirements of Burgas Free University.

3. Qualitative Assessment According to the Criteria for Research Activity

The publications submitted by Dr. Vilyana Yankova Ruseva are characterized by high scientific value, thematic consistency, and a clearly expressed interdisciplinary character, corresponding to Professional Field 3.7. Administration and Management (Human Resource Management and Organizational Management). The research focuses on key and contemporary managerial challenges such as sustainable development and ESG policies, human resource management, digitalization, continuing vocational education and training, innovation, entrepreneurial and organizational behavior, as well as social and community-based entrepreneurship. The topics are fully aligned with European policies (European Green Deal, CSRD, ESRS, Industry 5.0) and the current needs of business and the public sector, which gives the research a high level of social relevance and practical applicability.

The habilitation monograph demonstrates a mature scientific approach, combining systematic theoretical analysis with empirical research conducted in real organizations. Established quantitative and qualitative methods are applied appropriately, including document analysis, surveys, interviews, statistical processing, and comparative analysis. The articles and studies employ adequate analytical tools (correlation and regression analysis, SWOT, comparative models), evidencing strong methodological competence and critical thinking skills.

The overall publication corpus demonstrates clear logical continuity and development from the topics addressed in the doctoral dissertation toward broader issues of sustainable management, ESG, digitalization, and innovation in human resource management. This confirms the existence of an independent and sustainable research agenda, which is an essential characteristic for awarding the academic position of Associate Professor.

4. Compliance with Research Contributions

The presented scientific works of Dr. Vilyana Yankova Ruseva contain clearly identifiable theoretical and applied research contributions, fully consistent with the requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor. On a **theoretical level**, the contributions include the development of a comprehensive conceptual framework for integrating ESG principles into human resource management, the advancement of theory in vocational education, consulting, and organizational know-how, as well as the enrichment of scientific models for innovation, digital transformation, organizational culture, and social entrepreneurship. From a **practical perspective**, the works propose applicable models, indicators, and managerial solutions, validated through empirical research, aimed at improving organizational effectiveness, implementing ESG strategies, digital learning platforms, design thinking, and the use of artificial intelligence in management and training.

Overall, the contributions are original, scientifically substantiated, and clearly applicable, which confirms compliance with the criteria for research activity and convincingly establishes Dr. Vilyana Ruseva as an **independent, established, and promising member of the academic community in Bulgaria.**

5. Remarks and Recommendations

I have no critical remarks or questions regarding the work of Dr. Vilyana Ruseva; instead, I offer several recommendations concerning directions for her future research:

1. In some studies, the empirical data are collected at a regional level or within a limited number of organizations. Future research could benefit from expanding the scope to a national or transnational level, enabling more generalizable conclusions and comparative analyses.
2. Some of the examined processes (e.g., continuing education and training, ESG practices, digitalization, innovation capacity) are dynamic over time. Future studies could further develop the achieved results through longitudinal models and more detailed international comparisons, including comparative analyses based on empirical data from previous studies on ESG practices and corporate sustainability in Bulgaria and in the EU.

CONCLUSION

In her capacity as a candidate for the academic position of Associate Professor, Dr. Vilyana Yankova Ruseva meets the adopted national minimum requirements and the recommended scientific and scientometric requirements of Burgas Free University. Her scientific output contains theoretical and applied research contributions, aimed at improving both theory and practice, and includes generalizations derived from systematic research activity. Her teaching activity presents her as an excellent university lecturer, while her publications in prestigious journals and her participation in national and international academic forums have earned her recognition and authority within the scientific community.

With sufficient justification and firm conviction, I propose that **Dr. Vilyana Yankova Ruseva be elected to the academic position of Associate Professor in Professional Field 3.7. Administration and Management (Human Resource Management and Organizational Management), under the competition announced for the needs of the Center for Economic and Management Sciences at Burgas Free University. I am confident that holding the academic position of Associate Professor is well deserved and will provide her with further opportunities for scientific development and teaching excellence, while contributing a highly qualified academic staff member to the management and prosperity of the University.**

23 January 2026

Member of the Scientific Jury:

Prof. DSc. Rumiana Russeva Zheleva