

REVIEW

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Concerning: *the academic work submitted for participation in the contest for awarding the academic degree “Associate Professor” in professional strand 3.7. Administration and Management (Entrepreneurship, Competitiveness, Business Development, Artificial Intelligence), promulgated in SG, issue 44/19.05.2023, candidate Senior Assist. Prof. Dr Juliana Bozhidarova Hadjitchoneva*

I. Assessment for conformity with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of New Bulgarian University

The contest for the academic position Professor in Professional Field 3.7 Administration and Management (Entrepreneurship, Competitiveness, Business Development, Artificial Intelligence) is announced in accordance with the established legal procedures, to meet the needs of Administration and Management Department, of the School of Distance, Online and Continuing Education of New Bulgarian University. I participate in the academic panel summoned for the contest, under Ordinance No. 3-PK-285 of 13.07.2023, by the Rector of NBU.

One candidate participates in the announced contest – Senior Assist. Prof. Dr Juliana Bozhidarova Hadjitchoneva, PhD. The documentation submitted for the contest meets the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA) (Art. 2b) The Implementation Rules for DASRBA (Art.1a, Para.1), as well as the requirements of NBU, as defined in Annex 2 of the NBU’s Ordinance for Faculty Development.

The Reference presented by Senior Assist. Prof. Dr Juliana Hadjitchoneva, PhD for compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the NBU shows that the required minimum is exceeded with almost 40% of the total number of points required for taking up the academic position “Associate Professor” at NBU, and, at the same

time, all specific requirements for the separate sections are also met. Significant is the overperformance in the compulsory for NBU sections (by almost 80%).

Group of indicators		Minimum Requirements for Associate Professor, according to IRDASRBA and the requirements of NBU	Compliance with requirements for Associate Professor by Senior Assist. Prof. Juliana Hadjitchoneva
A	Indicator 1	50	50
B	Indicator 2	-	-
V	Indicator 3	100	100
G	Sum of Indicators 4 -10	200	258,4
D	Sum of Indicators 11 -13	50	80
E	Sum of Indicators 14 - 21	-	-
J.	Sum of Indicators 22-49 (compulsory for NBU)	50	125
Z.		70	90
I.		50	90
Total:		570	793,4

II. Research (creative) activities and results

1. Evaluation of the monograph, creative performances or other publications corresponding in volume and integrity to those of a monograph, including evaluation of the scientific and applied contributions of the author.

The submitted by the candidate Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva's habilitation thesis for the contest is entitled "Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Artificial Intelligence in Bulgaria: Dynamics and Management". Sofia, UNWE Press Complex, 2022, ISBN: ISBN 978-619-232-597-8. The monograph is 282 pages in volume and is based on the study, analysis and systematisation of various literature and information sources (books, articles, archival references, reports, regulations, handbooks, normative documents, statistical data, presentations, reports of public institutions, strategic documents, statements, official and specialised websites). The bibliography presented contains a total of 321 sources, of which 247 are in English and French. The literature and information sources are focused on the problem under study. They are used appropriately and cited correctly. The author's ability to make scientific selections and to be critical to others' opinions and concepts when structuring her own opinion in order to prove her main thesis in the monographic work makes a good impression.

The monographic study focuses on actual and significant for management and economic science and practice issues related to the development of entrepreneurship and innovation in Bulgaria. It focuses on the main components and dimensions of entrepreneurial

and innovation dynamics, namely entrepreneurial intentions, entrepreneurial choices and decisions, creation of new value, entrepreneurial process from start-up through action to survival or development. The author traces the trends in the development of the environment and the changes in the approaches to the realisation of entrepreneurial and innovative activity. Cognitive technologies and artificial intelligence are examined as factors shaping new business models and ways of decision making. In her research, Senior Assist. Prof. Hadjitchoneva, PhD successfully defends the thesis that the contemporary general development of entrepreneurship and innovation is a complex result of three interrelated processes: (i) the evolution of economic thought and action as a response to contemporary socio-economic challenges; (ii) the trends in the development of entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystems as overall mechanisms for interaction, support, development and sustainability; and (iii) the dynamics of entrepreneurial and innovative opportunities and management choices (decisions) as an opportunity for value creation and accumulation and a prerequisite for subsequent performance improvement.

The monographic work is of interest for scientific and economic practice. It contains a number of statements, proposals and results that can be assessed as contributions of theoretical and practical nature. As theoretical contributions of the monographic work can be perceived the results of the synthesis of basic economic concepts and theories that form the framework of modern economic and managerial views and determine the emergence of new entrepreneurial opportunities, threats, and risks, as well as the systematisation of the general and specific effects of the introduction and use of artificial intelligence innovations for forecasting and decision-making. The author's proposed model for analysing the entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem can also be evaluated with contribution to the theory. Its application to the study of the place of entrepreneurship and innovation in the Bulgarian economy can be defined as a practical contribution. Novel in theory and useful for practice are the results of the analysis of the current approaches to building and implementing business and competitive strategies through the development and implementation of innovative cognitive technologies. Practical applicability can be found in the proposed models to support the management of the modern company in assessing the business value created by the application of innovative solutions and artificial intelligence, including the implementation of innovative solutions in the sectors of fintech, retail and e-commerce. Researchers, managers, and consultants may find the results of the broad range of studies presented and the author's own empirical research useful in highlighting trends in the development of the entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystems.

In summary, I accept the candidate's declared claims for contributions in the monographic work, which are formulated correctly and synthesized, and which reflect the results and achievements of her scientific and applied research in the studied problems.

2. Evaluation of the contributions of the other attached publications (creative performances), made after being awarded the academic position Senior Assistant Professor. It shall also include an assessment of the requirement to review the publications.

Apart from the habilitation work, Senior Assoc. Prof. Juliana Hadjitchoneva, PhD has submitted the following publications as well:

- In collective monographs (authorship, and scientific editing): 4
- Chapters in Collective Monographs: 4
- Articles and studies: 30, of which 19 co-authored. One study and 3 articles have been published in scientific journals, refereed, and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information – Scopus и Web of Science.

The publications do not repeat the ones submitted for obtaining the Ph.D. degree and for holding the academic position of “Senior Assistant Professor” and I am not aware of any plagiarism in the candidate's scientific works proven under the statutory procedure.

All the publications with which the Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD participated in the competition for “Associate Professor” are in thematic areas of the competition announced in professional field 3.7 Administration and Management, and the accents in her scientific works can be grouped into several areas: (1) dynamics of entrepreneurship and development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, (2) competitiveness management at national, regional and firm level, (3) management and business development to expand business operations, increase market presence, and enhance overall company profitability, (4) innovation and innovation process management, and application of cognitive technologies for artificial intelligence to improve productivity and overall business performance and business policies.

The review of the submitted scientific works and publications of Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD allows to highly evaluate their scientific content and their usefulness for practice in terms of the results achieved.

3. Citation by other authors.

A large part of the publications of Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD are cited in the works of other researchers (21 citations), which is a testimonial for the positive acceptance of the theses and results of her research. Authors of publications in scientific

journals indexed in Scopus have referred to 3 of the candidate's publications. Five of the publications of Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD have been cited in monographs and peer-reviewed collective volumes.

The required number of citations is certified by a reference from the Book Centre, NBU Library. Among the sources checked 65 references to publications by Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD, of which 44 are self-citations. The applicant meets the requirements.

4. Evaluation of the results of participation in research and creative projects and implementation of the research results in practice.

The research interests of Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD are in the field of management, entrepreneurship and innovation, artificial intelligence, competitiveness, and international economic relations. Her research program envisages deepening her work in these areas.

Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD has participated in a number of international and national projects under the OPAC and ERASMUS+ Programmes. In the period 2017-2021 she was a member of the research team of the project “Innovative models for increasing the competitiveness of agricultural farms in Bulgaria”, funded by the Scientific Research Fund of the Ministry of Education and Science. She is the project leader and national representative of the Global University Project on the Study of Entrepreneurial Attitudes and Entrepreneurial Activities of Students (GUESSS) of the University of Bern and the University of Saint Gallen, Switzerland. She is actively involved in educational and creative projects funded by the NBU. Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD popularizes the results of her research activities at numerous national and international conferences and scientific-practical forums.

My overall assessment of the research activity of Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD is positive. The candidate is an established researcher and an authority in her scientific field.

III. Tutoring and teaching activities

Juliana Hadjitchoneva is PhD in Business Administration (Social Management) since 2015, since then she has been an Assistant Professor and Lecturer at NBU. Since March 2018 she has been holding tenure as a Senior Assistant Professor.

Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD is teaching and tutoring students in Master's degree programmes of Business Administration, Marketing and Management, Human Resource Management (in English), Tourism Management, Management for Organizational Excellence) in the following subjects: Competitiveness and Business Development, Strategic Management and Analysis Tools, Models of Organizational Excellence, Project Management, Public Policies in Tourism, Economic Policies of Sustainability, and others (in Bulgarian, English and French). She is delivering lectures and practice courses to students of Bachelor's degree programmes of Business Management and Entrepreneurship, and Tourism in the following subjects: Entrepreneurship and Business, Competitiveness and Innovation, Business Environment and Innovation, Innovation Process Management, Project and Programme Management, Society, Economics and Business (GENB).

For the purpose of the training in "Moodle NBU" Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD provides author's materials on the topics of the courses Competitiveness and Business Development and Competitiveness and Innovation, which also fulfils the requirements for publication of teaching materials (according to the requirements for employment of full-time lecturers at NBU).

Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD also teaches foreign language lecture courses – in French and in English.

All teaching disciplines and courses are in the professional field in which the contest is announced.

The candidate for the competition has participated in the improvement of the Bachelor's programme of Business Management and Entrepreneurship and the Master's programme in Business Administration. She is also highly active in the development of new lecture courses for full-time and/or distance learning Bachelor's and Master's programmes.

The teaching activity of Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD is positively evaluated by the students. The average score of students' satisfaction with the courses taught by her is 4.14 (max. 5.00) (according to the Quality and Assessment Centre).

In the period 2016-2021, Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD has been a supervisor of 13 students who have successfully defended their diploma research goals; she has prepared over 40 reviews and participated in over 10 examination committees.

To improve and expand her teaching skills and knowledge, Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD actively participates in training programs and teaching discussions

organized at NBU (official note from the Centre for Career Development and Learning Resources).

Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD has repeatedly been an organizer and moderator of numerous practice-oriented seminars with businesses in the field of entrepreneurship, artificial intelligence, and competitiveness. As an established lecturer, she has delivered public lectures at the invitation of EUDigit - European Digital Citizens Project, and of the University of Savoie Mont Blanc of Chambéry, France.

Highly appreciated is also the collaborative research and creative work of Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD with students – there are published collaborative paper and collective monograph.

Together with students in 2017 she participated in field research under the educational project “Urban policies, business environment and local democracy: a study of a medium-sized Bulgarian town (Lom)”, funded by NBU.

Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD actively participates in the establishment and development of the Summer School “Policies and Innovations for Cities”, providing students with the opportunity for field training by experts in the field of urban development and management.

It can be concluded that the academic and teaching activity of Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD is definitely related to the subject of the contest, and the accumulated teaching experience is fully satisfactory for holding the academic position of Associate Professor at NBU.

IV. Administrative and Social Work

Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD has been a member of the Program Council of the Department of Administration and Management in the period 2015-2019, and after 2020 she is a member of the Program Council of the Department of Political Sciences, she has been a program consultant for various Master’s and Bachelor’s programs in the Department of Administration and Management. The candidate for the contest fulfils her academic duties conscientiously, participates regularly in the meetings of the Council of the Department of Administration and Management, including the Programme Councils for the period in which she performs additional administrative functions as a Programme Consultant, respects her reception time and holds her classes regularly.

As a researcher, Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD is a member of prestigious international research communities – Associate Researcher at the Centre for Institutional

Research of the Bernardo O'Higgins University in Santiago de Chile, Chile; member of the International Association of French-Speaking Economists AIELF; member of the European Research Network ERECO-PGV (#European #Research #Community), and since 2021 a member of the board of the research network. Juliana Hadjitchoneva is the founder and managing director of Bars Consult for consulting and project management (2015-2019).

A testimony to Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD's high professionalism as a researcher is her participation in the Editorial Board of the international journal of French-speaking economists RIELF, in the Editorial Board for the publication of the Conference Proceedings of the Department of Administration and Management of the NBU, as well as participation in scientific committees of conferences and journals at both home and abroad (Romania, Algeria, Morocco).

The candidate's professional achievements are also receiving public recognition in the practice. This is evidenced by the prestigious positions she has held in different periods of her career development (expert in the Directorate of Administrative Regulation and Administrative Services of the Ministry of State Administration and Administrative Reform (2005-2009), chief expert in the Directorate of Economic and Financial Activities, Public Procurement and Human Resources Management in the Administration of the Council of Ministers (1997-2005), deputy chair and co-founder of a non-governmental organisation in the field of public governance, democracy, civil participation and consultations with stakeholders, and corporate social responsibility (2011-2018)).

V. Personal impressions of the candidate

I know Juliana Hadjitchoneva from her participation in scientific forums. My personal impressions are that she is distinguished by a remarkable professionalism and high competence.

VI. Opinions, recommendations and notes on the applicant's activities and achievements

I have no critical remarks to Senior Assist. Prof. J. Hadjitchoneva, PhD's self-evaluation and the attached materials evidencing her achievements and contributions for the academic position of Associate Professor.

With regard to the future teaching work of Juliana Hadjitchoneva as Associate Professor, it is appropriate to develop and publish independent teaching materials (teaching manuals and textbooks).

Conclusion

In summary of the statement so far, evaluated in totality, it can be confidently asserted that the candidate satisfies the requirements for holding the academic position of “Associate Professor” in accordance with the DASRBA, the regulations for its implementation, as well as the requirements of the NBU set out in Appendix 2 of the NRAS at the University.

With full conviction and responsibility, I propose Senior Assistant Prof. Juliana Hadjitchoneva, PhD to be elected to the academic position of Associate Professor in the professional field 3.7 Administration and Management at NBU.

Date 29.08.2023

Signature