

STATEMENT

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In relation to a competition for the Academic Position “Professor” in the field of higher education “7. Health and Sports, professional area “7.1. Medicine”, specialty “Social Medicine and Health Care and Pharmacy Organization” for the needs of the Department of Social Medicine and Health Care Organization at the Faculty of Public Health of the Medical University “Prof. Dr. P. Stoyanov”, Varna, announced in State Gazette, No. 14 from 18.02.2022.

According to Order No. R-109-162/14.04.2022 I was included as an internal member of the Scientific Jury. According to Protocol No1/29.04.2022 from the first meeting of the Scientific Jury I was appointed to prepare a statement for the procedure.

There is one candidate in the competition – Assoc. Prof. Dr. Klara Georgieva Dokova, MD, PhD.

The candidate has accurately submitted all necessary documents for participation in the competition, complying with the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Medical University, Varna.

Career Profile of the Candidate

Klara Dokova acquired a Master’s degree in “Medicine” at the Medical University of Varna in 1994. In 1997 she continued her education with a second Master’s degree in Public Health, which she acquired at the Maastricht University, the Netherlands. In 1999 Dr Dokova acquired the medical specialty “Social Medicine”. In 2009 she successfully defended a dissertation at the Medical University of Varna on the topic “Awareness, treatment and control of blood pressure among the rural population. Barriers for control” and acquired the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the scientific specialty "Social Medicine and Health Care and Pharmacy Organization".

Dr. Dokova’s work experience began in 1995 as a therapist at Asparuhovo Municipal Hospital - Varna. In the period 1999 – 2001 she worked as the coordinator of an international research project. She started her academic career in 2001 at the Department of Social Medicine and Health Care Organization, Medical University – Varna, where she consecutively passed through the academic positions “Assistant”, “Senior assistant” and “Chief assistant”. In 2012, after winning a competition, she held the Academic Position “Assoc. Professor” at the same department. In the period 2014 - 2018 Assoc. Prof. Dokova was Vice Dean of the Faculty of Public Health (FPH) at MU – Varna, and in the period 2018–2020 Dean of the FPH.

The candidate participated in a number of national and international qualification courses for continuous education and short-term specializations in leading international universities and scientific institutes. This contributes to her professional development as a researcher and academic supervisor. The main directions of her postgraduate training and

qualifications are in the fields of epidemiology, medical statistics, global burden of disease, health promotion and medical sociology.

The candidate actively participates as a supervisor, expert, principal investigator or member of working groups in educational and research projects, most of them international.

Assoc. Prof. Dokova is a member of international and national scientific, professional and non-governmental organizations, including the European Public Health Association; the European Epidemiological Association; the Bulgarian Medical Association; the Bulgarian Public Health Association, the Bulgarian Scientific Public Health Union; Bulgarian Medical Union, Public Health – 99.

She is fluent in and uses freely in her professional and research activities English and Russian.

Scientific and applied research activities

The scientific publications and reports presented for the competition prove the high quality and international recognition of the scientific production of Assoc. Prof. Dokova.

A total of 47 scientific works are presented for participation in the competition – real publications that reflect the research activity of the candidate in the period 2013-2022.

Their distribution by types is as follows:

- One dissertation work for the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”;
- A monograph (habilitation) work - "Global Burden of Disease Studies. Burden of Diseases in Bulgaria 1990-2019”;
- One textbook;
- 15 publications in international journals, refereed and indexed in international scientific databases;
- 18 publications in scientific peer reviewed journals (non-refereed);
- One chapter in a collective monograph in English, published abroad;
- 10 additional publications above the minimum scientific requirements for occupying the Academic Position "Professor”, published in scientific peer reviewed journals (non-refereed).

All publications are correctly described and attached in full-text in electronic format to the materials for the competition. Twenty-three of the publications are in Bulgarian and 24 are published in English.

In addition, the candidate provides information about 30 participations in scientific forums, 12 of which are international and 18 national. The high personal contribution to the scientific works of the candidate has been proven, as well as her affiliation with international teams of large-scale scientific research.

The works have been published in reputable scientific journals abroad and in Bulgaria, such as: BMC Public Health; Neuroepidemiology; European Journal of Public Health; Lancet; Lancet Neurology; J Patient Experience; BMJ Open; Healthcare; Ophthalmic Epidemiology; Black Sea Journal of Medicine and Public Health; Social Medicine; Scripta Scientifica Salutis Publicae; Scripta Scientifica Medica; Health Economics and Management; The Journal of the Bulgarian Hypertension League; Aesclepius; Varna Medical Forum.

The research activities and the scientific contributions of Associate Professor Dokova are in the field of the scientific specialty of the announced competition. They can be grouped in the following thematic areas:

1. Assessment of public health and health inequalities through indicators of morbidity, mortality and burden of disease;
2. Prevention and promotion of health;
3. Medical Sociology;
4. Training of professionals in the field of public health.

The leading focus in the research works of the candidate is related to the assessment of public health and health inequalities through indicators of morbidity, mortality and burden of disease. It can be further divided in the following thematic subgroups: (1) regional health inequalities, (2) disease registers and epidemiological assessment based on the information collected in the registers and (3) studies of morbidity, mortality and burden of diseases.

Particularly valuable is the complex assessment of the burden of diseases in Bulgaria for the period 1990-2019 based on the latest results of the Global Burden of Disease Study. The analysis includes also results on the role of the main risk factors for the health of the Bulgarian population. Based on an analysis of the achievements in relation to the global development goals related to health, priorities for health policy in Bulgaria are proposed.

Health losses related to hypertensive heart disease in Bulgaria for the period 1990-2019 have been assessed. A series of publications are dedicated to assessing the burden of disease of strokes at the regional and global level, as well as the contribution of stroke disease burden to health inequalities between Western and Central/Eastern Europe. The international efforts for creating registers for chronic diseases - diabetes, diabetic retinopathy and strokes has been studied. Own results from efforts to build regional registries of diabetic retinopathy and stroke are presented.

The second scientific area "Health Prevention and Promotion" includes publications that track the development of the idea and the possibilities for practical realization of the concept of health promotion by applying the principles in the so-called "health promotion places". The process of building and validating the global network of universities for health is considered. The comprehensive university approach successfully applied in the British Network of Universities for Health is presented. Modern trends and alternative approaches to providing early childhood care are presented, as well as social changes which have led to radical changes in the care of people with disabilities.

Extremely valuable and original for our country is the textbook of Medical Sociology, suitable for the training of students of all health specialties. For the first time in Bulgarian textbook the application of basic sociological theories for analysis of problems in the field of medicine and healthcare is presented.

The publications included in the area "Training of specialists in the field of public health" are aimed at analyzing the development of the Bachelor public health education in Bulgaria. The conformity of the education in Bulgaria with the European Recommendations for the Competences of the respective health professions is performed for the public health and assistant pharmacy specialties.

I accept the scientific contributions as indicated systematically in the applicant's documents. They are correctly defined by thematic areas and well-founded in the enclosed scientific works.

The scientific production of Assoc. Prof. Dokova is a reflection of her interdisciplinary specialization, her erudition, sensitivity, scientific interests and dedication to research. Summarizing the characteristics of her scientific works, I want to emphasize the actuality of

the studied subjects, the sensitivity to problems of national and global importance; the high quality and precise execution; the original contribution character and potential for practical applicability of the results; the collaboration with international research teams and author collectives.

Evidence for the high quality of the publications and their reflection in the international scientific literature is presented. For this competition, the candidate has submitted a report from the library of the MU – Varna for 16 citations – all of which are in scientific publications, refereed and indexed in international scientific databases. The real citations in the Web of Science are over 15000, which is indicative of the high topicality of the subject matter under consideration and the recognition of the candidate from the international scientific community.

Undoubted confirmation of the international recognition and quality of the scientific works of Assoc. Prof. Dokova is the high impact factor of her scientific production - a total IF of 1312.812.

According to the presented reports Assoc. Prof. Klara Dokova has registered active scientific profiles in Google Scholar, Scopus; ORCID; Web of Science Researcher; Research Gate. The candidate takes an active part in national and international scientific forums and working groups in the field of the competition, including as a moderator and lecturer at scientific events.

Assoc. Prof. Dokova participates in four international and two national scientific projects related to the main focus of her scientific interests. She is also a leader of 2 national research projects and of the Bulgarian team in an international scientific project.

Proof of the recognition of the research qualities and scientific achievements of the candidate is the Pitagor Prize for Science in the category “Best Woman in Science” awarded to her in 2020.

Assoc. Prof. Dokova is a reviewer of articles in prestigious foreign and Bulgarian magazines. She is a member of the editorial boards of the magazines "Social Medicine" and "Scripta Scientifica Salutis Publicae".

Teaching Activities

Assoc. Prof. Klara Dokova has over 24 years of experience in the specialty and more than 20 years of teaching experience in the Department of Social Medicine and Health Care Organization at the Faculty of Health, MU – Varna. Her teaching workload is very high (average 433 audience hours per year in the last five years) and exceeds significantly the required norm for teaching employment.

The teaching activity of the candidate is in the sphere of her broad interdisciplinary training and scientific interests in the field of public health. She is actively involved in the teaching of students of different specialties and educational-qualifications (including in English-language training) by leading the disciplines: “Social medicine and biostatistics”; “Introduction to epidemiology”; “Applied epidemiology and health promotion”; “Medical Sociology”, “Sociology of Health and Disease”; “Medical and Social aspects of disability”.

Assoc. Prof. Dokova is a member of the program councils of several specialties at the Faculty of Public Health and participates in the development and update of their teaching curricula and programs. She takes part in examination committees for state examinations / thesis works defense of students from the Faculties of Public Health and Medicine at the MU of Varna.

She is the author and co-author of textbooks and teaching materials that are used for the training of students from different specialties.

Assoc. Prof. Klara Dokova is the supervisor of six PhD students in the doctoral programs in Social Medicine and Organization of Health Care and Pharmacy and Public Health Management, five of whom have already successfully defended their dissertation works. She is a supervisor of 18 graduates from the Master's programs of the FPH, who defended their master's thesis works in the period 2013 - 2022. Except as a scientific supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Dokova also actively works with many other PhD students and young scientists, providing them with methodological assistance in their scientific works. She participates in the training of postgraduate students and leads a course for postgraduate training "Research Design and statistical analyses".

Expert activities

Assoc. Prof. Dokova works very actively with young scientists and PhD students, providing them with methodological support in the area of research design and the use of statistical methods for data processing and interpretation of results. The candidate is an expert in the field of global burden of disease and is a collaborator in the Global Burden of Disease Study for our country. She is a collaborator of the WHO Regions for Health Network – Focal Point for Varna Region and Member of the Management Board of the Public Health – 99 Association.

She has significant organizational and managerial experience. She is actively involved in the management bodies of the Faculty of Public Health – as a Vice Dean (for the period 2014 – 2018) and Dean (2018 – 2020).

Compliance with the requirements for obtaining the academic position "Professor" of the MU – Varna

The reports presented confirm that Assoc. Klara Dokova fully covers, and for some groups of indicators (G, D and E) significantly exceeds the scientific requirements for occupying the academic position "Professor" (Table 1).

Table 1. Compliance with the scientific requirements of the MU of Varna for obtaining the academic position "Professor"

Groups of indicators	Required number of points	Number of points based on presented evidence
A	50	50
B	-	-
C	100	100
G	200 (≥ 100 from G7)	341.19 (113.73 from G7)
D	100	240
E	100 (≥ 80 from E14)	450 (140 from E14)

Conclusion

The candidate participating in this competition fully covers, and on most of the indicators significantly exceeds the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Medical University – Varna for the occupation of the academic position "Professor".

Assoc. Prof. Klara Dokova is an academic lecturer and researcher with many years of experience, established authority on a national and international scale. She receives high recognition as a member of scientific organizations and is an active participant in national and international academic collaborations and research projects.

The candidate provides up-to-date, original scientific production of high quality, global significance, international recognition and significant potential for practical applicability. She has interdisciplinary qualification, interests and expertise, as well as significant organizational and management capacity.

The overall assessment of the professional development, the educational and teaching activity, the work with PhD students and young researchers, scientific appearances, contribution and international recognition, the expert potential, the organizational and managerial achievements and the established authority of the candidate provide the basis for a positive opinion and I would like to propose to the members of the Scientific Jury to choose Assoc. Prof. Klara Georgieva Dokova, MD, PhD for the academic position “Professor” in the field of higher education “7. Health and Sports, professional field “7.1. Medicine”, specialty “Social Medicine and Organization of Health Care and Pharmacy” for the needs of the Department of Social Medicine and Health Care Organization at the Faculty of Public Health, Medical University – Varna.

05. 06. 2022
Varna, Bulgaria

Chairman of the Scientific Jury:
/Prof. Albena Kerekovska, MD, PhD/

