

## **STATEMENT**

By Assoc. Prof. Klara Georgieva Dokova, MD, PhD  
Department of Social Medicine and Health Care Organization  
Faculty of Public Health  
Medical University "Prof. Dr. P. Stoyanov", Varna

**Re:** Competition for acquiring an academic position "Associate Professor" in the area of higher education 7. Health and Sports, professional field 7.4 Public Health; specialty "Public Health Management" for the needs of the department of "Social Medicine and Health Care Organization" at the Faculty of Public Health, Medical University "Prof. Dr. P. Stoyanov" Varna, promulgated in State Gazette 53/12.06.2020.

According to Order No P-109-303 /7.08.2020 of the Rector of the Medical University of Varna I was appointed as an internal member of the scientific jury and with the decision of its first meeting held on 25.08.2020 I was appointed to prepare a Statement.

In the present competition there is only one candidate, Silviya Pavlova Nikolova, PhD, Senior assistant professor at the Department of „Social Medicine and Health Care Organization”, Faculty of Public Health Medical University of Varna "Prof. Dr. P. Stoyanov", Varna. The candidate presented all necessary documents as required by the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules for its application.

### **I. Career development of the candidate**

Silviya Nikolova was born on 05.01.1983 in the town of Stara Zagora. In 2005 she acquired a Bachelor's Degree in "Health Care Management" and in 2006 a Master Degree in the same specialty at the Medical University of Varna. In the period 2009-2013 she was a full-time PhD student at the Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo Leon/University of Texas at Arlington, at the Department of "Social Activities" where she acquired a PhD after a successful defense of her thesis titled: Geography of Disability. An Analysis Based on the Socioeconomic Levels of Two Metropolitan Areas Dallas Texas and Monterrey Nuevo Leon".

Her professional career started in 2014 as an assistant professor at the department of Social Medicine and Health Care Organization, Medical University of Varna and from 2016 she was promoted as Senior assistant professor at the same department.

Silviya Nikolova has a specialty in medical informatics and health care management.

In 2017 she actively participated in the development and implementation of the Project „Regional Partnership for Health and Sustainable Development“, financed by the Ministry of Health, within the framework of the programme BG 07 "Public Health Initiatives", with the aim of establishment a regional partnership between the region of Varna and the region of Ostfold, Norway in the field of Public Health. In 2018 she won a Fulbright research scholarship competition and conducted five months of

research at the University of Chicago, Illinois on the topic „Prevalence and patterns of non-communicable related disabilities in the US”. Her research in the field of disability received the „2019 Disability Manuscript Award”.

Beyond the intense teaching and research, as a member of the team of the International Center for electronic and distance learning Silviya Nikolova is actively involved in the organization and provision of support for the e-learning at the MU Varna, occupying an increasingly important place among the diverse range of educational forms offered by the Faculty of Public Health and the University.

Silviya Nikolova has an excellent command of English and Spanish and actively uses both of the languages.

### **III. Scientific activity of the candidate**

Silviya Nikolova applies in the current competition with 22 full-text scientific papers, structurally including:

- 1 monograph
- 21 full-text scientific papers and reports.

Most of the articles submitted for the competition have been published in English or Spanish in important scientific journals. Almost half of them are in periodicals with an impact factor.

In 3 of the publications Silviya Nikolova is a single author, and in three more she is the first author in a team. A document indicating 35 citations of her publications is presented, but according to the Google scholar profile of Silviya Nikolova the citations of her work exceed 90. The good visibility of the scientific work of the candidate is strongly supported by her active participation in scientific forums, proved by 32 titles of reports presented in the period 2003-2019.

*The quantitative analysis of the scientific publications of Silviya Nikolova confirms that they meet the criteria for occupying the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the area of higher education 7. Health and Sports.*

#### ***Qualitative Characteristics of the Scientific Work***

In terms of topics, S. Pavlova outlines 4 directions of her scientific research, in which her publications can be grouped:

1. Socio-economic factors, health and disability;
2. Public health problems in Sub-Sahara Africa;
3. Health Promotion;
4. Varia

Most of the publications are dedicated to the first topic "Socio-economic factors, health and disability", which includes the monograph of the candidate. In it, Silviya Nikolova adopts the social model of disabilities and the cause to reveal and fight

against all environmental factors that in one way or another make the lives of people with disabilities harder compared to the limitations created by the disability itself.

I appreciate her position because as evidenced from experience the attitude of societies towards people with disabilities changes more dynamically when active social movements fight for equal rights, access, reveal stigma, labels and their effect on people's lives. In addition to the stated active civil position, Silviya Pavlova has an ambition to methodologically support and catalyze research on issues related to the health and health care of people with disabilities. One of the significant contributions of her monograph is the presentation of a Bulgarian version of a well-established international toolkit, which allows conducting representative studies using comparable methods.

Interesting publications presenting the history of the development of social services for people with disabilities in Varna are related to the same thematic area. Her research crosses the borders of our country by analyzing policies aimed at people with disabilities in Mexico.

The second thematic area "Public health issues in sub-Saharan Africa" is also important for the candidate's research. Among those publications a systematic review examining all the factors for increased health risk as a result of existing gender inequalities in sub-Saharan Africa is of special importance.

The third area of scientific work "Health Promotion" is presented with four publications. Three of them study the impact of active folk dance activities on the health and behavior of young people.

The last group of publications combined under the title "Varia" presents the wide educational background and research capacity of Silviya Nikolova. She participates in the publications with her expertise in the field of epidemiological design and statistical data analysis. Among the publications on various clinical topics stands out a methodology for the work of teachers in an online environment, which presents Silvia Nikolova in her role as an expert at the International Center for Electronic and Distance Learning at MU Varna.

*The analysis of the scientific works of Silviya Nikolova provided for review, reveals interesting and well - grounded ideas, competency in the researched area, good knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research methods, adequate information and capacity for critical interpretation of recent scientific sources, good structure, language and style of the scientific work and up to date topics.*

#### **IV. Educational Activities**

Silviya Nikolova has 6 years of teaching experience, which fulfills the requirements of the Academic development Act and the Rules for its application and with the conditions of the present competition as announced in the State Gazette.

The presented information on teaching hours reveals that throughout her teaching career the average annual workload of Silviya Nikolova significantly exceeds the

institutional norms, which does not include the time devoted for mid-term and semester exams which she spends as a member of examination committees in all specialties which she is teaching.

Silviya Nikolova is lecturing and providing practical education, takes part in the development of teaching documents and educational materials for the disciplines Social Medicine, Biostatistics and Medico-social aspects of disabilities etc. She has supervised the work of two PhD students one of whom has successfully defended her PhD in 2019.

Besides the academic teaching Silviya Nikolova actively participates as a lecturer in trainings conducted for various audiences - students, teachers, community, etc.

## **V. Personal Impressions**

I know Silviya Nikolova since the time she became a staff member of the Department of Social Medicine and Health Care Organization. From our very first meetings she impressed me with the willingness, energy and activity working on tasks for the Department. Subsequently, I was convinced that her capacity to work has almost no limits.

She invests the same enthusiasm in the work with students, with the sincere desire to increase their interest in the disciplines she teaches, as well as to stimulate and introduce them to volunteering work. At her initiative, more than one charity campaign is organized annually at the University, all of which actively involve students from various specialties.

Silviya Nikolova is even more interested and active in research work. I cannot but note with gratitude the time she has devoted to the methodological meetings with doctoral students at the Faculty of Public Health with the genuine idea to raise the level of research activity at the Faculty.

In the course of our joint work on tasks of different nature, I had the opportunity to observe the precision with which she works and her professional correctness.

I am convinced that those attributes guarantee that Silviya Nikolova will continue to develop her potential in the higher academic position for which she is applying and will contribute to the development of the Department "Social Medicine and Health Care Organization" at the Faculty of Public Health, MU - Varna.

## **VI. Compliance with the requirements of MU-Varna for obtaining the academic position „Associate Professor”**

The presented information reveals that Senior Assistant Silviya Nikolova covers and exceeds in some groups the minimal indicators for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor" required under the Rules for Development of the Academic Staff of the Medical University of Varna (table 1).

Table 1: Compliance with the requirements of the MU-Varna for obtaining academic position “Associate Professor”

<i>Group of indicators</i>	<i>Required number of points</i>	<i>Number of points based on presented evidence</i>
A	50	50
Б	0	0
B	100	100
Г	200	249
Д	50	60
E	0	0

## VII Conclusion

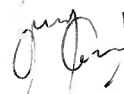
The analysis of the complete research and educational activities of Senior assistant prof. Silviya Nikolova, PhD proves that she covers the requirements for occupying the academic position “Associate Professor” required by the Academic development Act and the Rules for its application.

Silviya Nikolova has sufficient number valuable scientific work, prestige of a good lecturer and researcher, demonstrating potential for further intensive work.

These are the grounds for my positive assessment for the application of Senior Assistant Prof. Silviya Nikolova, PhD for the academic position “Associate Professor” for the scientific specialty “Public Health Management” for the needs of the Department of Social Medicine and Health Care Organization, Faculty of Public Health, Medical University “Prof. Dr. P. Stoyanov” – Varna.

6.10. 2020 г.

Signed:



/Assoc. Prof. Klara Dokova, MD, PhD/