

STATEMENT

by **Prof. Dr. Teodora Dimitrova, MD, PhD**

Head of Department of Hygiene and Epidemiology

Faculty of Public Health

Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov Medical University of Varna,

a member of a Scientific Jury according to Ordinance No. P-109-313/ 07.10.2019 of the Rector of the Medical University of Varna

Re: Competition for taking the academic title of *Professor in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and sport, professional field 7.1. Medicine, scientific speciality: Social Medicine and Organization of Healthcare and Pharmacy (working capacity expertise) – Training in Bulgarian and Training in English for the needs of the Department of Hygiene and Epidemiology at the Faculty of Public Health* with the Medical University of Varna, published in the State Gazette, issue 62/06.08.2019.

One candidate took part in the announced competition – **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Paraskeva Mancheva Draganova, MD, PhD, DSc**

The candidate submitted duly all the necessary documents for participation in the competition according to the requirements of the Act on Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and the Regulations for Development of the Academic Staff of the Medical University of Varna.

By Minutes No. 1/21.10.2019 of a meeting of the Scientific Jury, I have been appointed to prepare a statement.

Resume of the candidate's career development

Ass. Prof. Paraskeva Mancheva Draganova, MD, PhD, MSc acquired her academic degree of Master in Medicine from the Medical University of Varna in 1989. She has three medical specializations – in 1994, she specialized in Internal Diseases, in 1999 – in Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine, and in 2001 – in General Medicine. In 2014, the candidate successfully defended her dissertation at the Medical University of Varna on the topic *Legal Awareness for Legalization of Euthanasia and Quality of Life in Patients with Permanently Reduced Working Capacity* and acquired the academic degree of Doctor in the scientific field of General Medicine. Since 2016, she has been a legally authorized lawyer after acquiring the academic degree of Master in Law at the Free University of Varna. In 2018, she defended the scientific degree of Doctor of Science with the topic: *Medical and Social Problems of Disability in the System of Medical Expertise*.

She started her career at Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov Medical University of Varna in 1999 as an assistant, and then, consecutively as senior and chief administrative assistant at the Department of General Medicine, the Faculty of Public Health, with the Medical University of Varna. In the period 2006-2012, she was an expert in Internal Diseases at the General Territorial Expert Medical Commission with Sveta Marina University Multi-Profile Hospital for Active Treatment of Varna. In 2014, she won a competition for the academic title of Associate Professor at the Rehabilitation Training Sector at the Medical College with the Medical University of Varna, which she has been heading to this day. In 2017, she was appointed Head

of the University Centre for Eastern Medicine at the Medical University of Varna, which she has been successfully developing to date.

The candidate conducts qualification courses for continuous training and has taken part in training seminars in Bulgaria, as well as in Belgium, Russia and Indonesia. The main directions of her postgraduate training and qualification are in the field of functional research in medicine, psychotherapy, ayurveda and traditional Chinese medicine.

Assoc. Prof. Mancheva uses English and Russian in her professional and research activities.

General characteristics of the candidate's scientific and applied research activities

The publications and references attached for participation in the competition prove the candidate's high scientific productivity. For the participation in this competition, a total of 31 scientific papers have been attached – an outcome of her overall research activity. The papers have been distributed as follows:

- Thesis for the award of the academic degree of Doctor, presented with an abstract – 1 piece;
- Thesis for the award of the scientific degree of Doctor of Science – 1 piece;
- Published habilitation work – monograph – 1 piece;
- Publications in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information (Scopus) – 1 piece;
- Publications in magazines with scientific reviews, which are not referenced in world-famous databases with scientific information – 25 pieces.
 - ✓ 20 - in periodicals (4 of which being international);
 - ✓ 5 - in compilations of reports (4 of which being international);
- Published chapter of a collective monograph – 1 piece.
- Published university textbook – 1 piece.

14 titles of full-text publications have been pointed out, beyond those involved in the evidence material for covering the minimum requirements for occupying the academic title of *professor*. 3 of those are in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in Scopus, 1 - in foreign journals and 10 in Bulgarian journals with scientific review.

All publications have been correctly described, and publications after the acquisition of the academic title of *associate professor* have been fully enclosed to the materials required for the competition.

The scientific researches cover scientific issues aimed at a wide range of highly relevant and significant problems in the field of scientific specialty of the announced competition. The main thematic areas of the candidate's scientific research activity combine the achievements of her entire creative and professional path, focused on the chronically ill person with disability, and can be distinguished in the following directions:

1. Medical, social and legal problems of people with disabilities in the system of medical expertise, health and social systems
2. Investigation of the legal awareness of euthanasia in patients with disabilities from the medical expertise system
3. Organization of the system of medical expertise of the working capacity
4. Improvement of the student training (rehabilitation, kinesiotherapy and ergotherapy) focused on the complex rehabilitation of the chronically ill person and restoration of their working capacity
5. Opportunities for the introduction of Eastern medicine as adjunctive therapy in patients with chronic disabilities

The candidate's works have been published in various scientific publications abroad and in Bulgaria, i.e.: *Journal of IMAB; Healthcare Economics and Management; Social medicine; Varna Medical*

The scientific contributions are of original and confirmatory nature, and of theoretical and practical relevance to the region and country.

Researches related to the **medical, social and legal issues of people with disabilities, related to the functioning of the system of medical expertise and health and social systems**, occupy a significant place in the presented scientific works. In-depth studies of the patient's statutory path from the general practitioner to and after certification / re-certification by the Territorial Expert Medical Commission have been made and the key role of the expert decision for realization of the rights of people with disabilities has been outlined. The difficulties have been formulated and the possibilities for optimizing the procedure in the conditions of the current legislation have been presented. The results are of a quantitative study of the opinion of patients with disabilities about the functioning of the system of medical expertise and find no positive change in the situation and quality of life after the decision of the Territorial Expert Medical Commission, despite the realization of the fully legal established rights. The underestimated role of the rehabilitation and absence of the labour and professional function of the Territorial Expert Medical Commission have been analyzed. The reasons for the inadequate social integration of people with disabilities with the expert decision of the Territorial Expert Medical Commission have been studied and guidelines for the improvement of the access to and exercise of their rights under the current legislation have been presented. The need for a new Ordinance on medical expertise has been justified, with the unification of the medical and social assessment of expertise into one commission.

Studies related to **the study of the legal awareness of euthanasia in patients with disabilities from the medical expertise system and their quality of life** include the results of the first comprehensive euthanasia study among a vulnerable group of the society - polymorphic disabled people with poor quality of life, through a historical review of the phenomenon and its moral and ethical aspects, study and analysis of legal regulation across the world and in Bulgaria. The first in Bulgaria original toolkit for the study of legal consciousness - awareness, attitude and readiness for euthanasia behaviour, with a high degree of reliability has been systematized and implemented.

The conclusions of the scientific works on the organization of the system of medical expertise of the working capacity have been of considerable practical importance. The following have been analyzed: structure, activities, regulatory framework, administrative capacity, material, technical, financial and information support, control bodies and mechanisms. The opinion of experts from the institutions concerned about the issues of complex rehabilitation of people with disabilities has been assessed. The unfavourable role of the division of the medical from the social assessment in the expertise of working capacity has been revealed. A concept for a model of complex medical and social performance assessment, adapted to the European experience, has been developed. It lays down a new hierarchical structure of the system, a comprehensive and unified medical and social expertise providing timely and adequate social integration.

The works of the professional field called **Student training improvement (rehabilitation, kinesitherapy and ergotherapy) focused on the complex rehabilitation of chronically ill people and return of their working capacity** assess the methods of training and the topics included in the academic programmes and suggest expanding the topics in rehabilitation, kinesiotherapy and ergotherapy focused on the rehabilitation and return to the labour market; The leading position from the opportunities for optimization and training quality improvement falls to the survey results showing the satisfaction of patients with the work of rehabilitators and kinesiotherapists during the practical training, summer internship and their participation in the Student Practice Project;

The scientific research from the professional field of **Opportunities for introduction of eastern medicine as a complementary therapy for patients with chronic disabling diseases** includes studying the opportunities for cooperation between eastern and western medicine in Bulgaria focused on the problems of chronically ill, disabled patients with poor life quality. In the face of non-conventional (eastern, complementary) medicine, as a result of the chronic polymorbidity, disabled people find a wide range of methods for overall influence over the bio-, psycho- and social health components. A special emphasis in this research is put on the combination of non-convention methods and conventional medicine regarding the improvement of life quality of a disabled, chronically ill, polymorbid patient.

I accept the scientific contribution works, specified in the candidate's reference. They are grouped in topics and are well grounded in the enclosed scientific works and documents.

As a summarizing feature of the scientific works, I lay special emphasis on the wide range and topical issue of this problem as well as its original nature and potential for applying the results in the practice at regional and national level.

Evidence proving the high quality of publications and their reflection into Bulgarian scientific literature has been presented. The reference contains a total number of 41 positive quotes from Bulgarian and foreign authors (a total number of 245 points compared to the minimal national requirements of 100 points as per this indicator), which is indicative that the discussed problem is topical and the candidate is recognized by the Bulgarian scientific community.

Ass. Prof. Mancheva takes active participation in national and international projects.

Project activity – participation as an expert and coordinator in 5 research projects:

- Project BUL1R205 Improvement of sexual and reproductive health of young people in Bulgaria, realized jointly by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Science, UNFPA, 29.11-3.12.2006;

- Project as per the National program called Prevention and control of HIV/ AIDS, Training according to contemporary methods for prevention, consultation, diagnostics and treatment of HIV/ AIDS, 2007;

- Project of the Ministry of Health, National Centre of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases and Medical University of Varna, Prevention and control of HIV/ AIDS, Training of medical students, nurses, midwives and social workers regarding the problems related to the prevention and control of HIV/ AIDS, 4-6.06.2008;

- Project BUL 012/06 Mental health training of general practitioners: overcoming depression and anxiety in general medical practice, Bilateral cooperation convention of the Republic of Bulgaria and Flanders Region, Belgium, 08.12.2007; 4-6.06.2008;

- Project BG 052P0001-3.3.03.003 – Practical training in palliative medicine for medical students, 17-19.12.2009; 15.04.2010; 10.11.06.2010, medical expertise of working capacity, labour and social security law, general medicine, kinesiotherapy, rehabilitation, eastern medicine.

Assessment of the candidate's academic and teaching activity

Ass. Prof. Mancheva is a highly esteemed lecturer with excellent communication skills in the area of the competition organized by the Medical University of Varna. Her annual academic workload corresponds to and exceeds the academic workload accepted as a standard by the university.

The applicant participates actively in the teaching process of students from various fields of study with the academic degrees of Professional bachelor, Bachelor and Master and takes lectures in the following subjects: Medical expertise of working capacity, Labour and social security law, Kinesiotherapy, General medicine, Rehabilitation, Eastern medicine, etc.

The candidate has issued a textbook and books for students, post-graduates, doctorates and one of them is in English.

Conclusion:

The applicant participating in this competition complies fully with the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Rules for its application and the Rules for development of the academic staff of the Medical University of Varna regarding the holding

of the academic title of Professor. The scientific material is topical, original, sufficient in volume and has a wide thematic scope and significant theoretical and practical contribution.

The candidate's overall evaluation of her professional development, academic and teaching activity, scientific contribution, built reputation, organizational and expert experience provides a basis for me to give a **positive** opinion and to propose the jury members to choose Ass. Prof. Paraskeva Mancheva Draganova, MD, PhD, MSc for the academic title of Professor in the field of higher education. 7. Healthcare and sport professional field 7.1 Medicine, scientific speciality: Social Medicine and Organization of Healthcare and Pharmacy (working capacity expertise) – Training in Bulgarian and Training in English for the needs of the Department of Hygiene and Epidemiology at the Faculty of Public Health with the Medical University of Varna.

04.11.2019
City of Varna



Prof. Teodora Dimitrova, MD, PhD