

## **PEER REVIEW**

**by Prof. Dr. Emiliya Konstantinova**

with regards to a competition for occupation of the academic position “Professor”  
under Higher education field 8 “Arts”  
Professional field 8.1 “Theory of Arts”  
Specialty “Financial Management and Project Financing”  
at the Theory of Arts Department at  
Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv

### **Information about the competition**

Only one candidate – Associate Professor Dr. Vesela Stoyanova Kazashka, participated in the announced competition for occupation of the academic position “Professor” under Higher education field 8 “Arts”, Professional field 8.1 “Theory of Arts”, Specialty “Financial Management and Project Financing”. The competition was announced for the needs of the Theory of Arts Department at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv, with an advertisement published in State Gazette, Issue 88 dated 20.10.2023 and on the website of the Academy.

In accordance with the requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation, as well as the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquisition of scientific degrees and occupation of the academic position of “Professor” at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv, the candidate has attached all necessary documents, issued works, and scientific publications. The available scientometrics in terms of indicators and points presented by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Kazashka covers the minimum national requirements of the National Center for Information and Documentation, defined by law for the academic position “Professor” in the relevant field.

The competition procedure fully complies with the requirements of the state and university normative documents regarding the occupation of academic positions.

### **Brief biographical data and academic growth of the candidate**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Kazashka completed three Master’s degrees at Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University – in 1998 a Master’s degree in the specialty “Teacher of Bulgarian and Russian Languages”, in 2000 a Master’s degree in “Macroeconomics”, and in 2020 a Master’s degree in “Management Psychology”.

She also acquired the educational and qualification degree “Doctor” in the field “Special Pedagogy” with a dissertation on the topic: *“Positive Stigma Towards People*

*with Disabilities*” under Higher education field 1 “Pedagogical Sciences”, Professional field 1.2 “Pedagogy” at the same University.

In the period from 1998 until 2015, the candidate was the Head of a Professional Training Center, and from 2001 until 2012 she was the Director of the “Scientific and Applied Activity” Department and the Financier of all national and international projects of P. Hilendarski Plovdiv University.

Since 2017, she has been a full-time lecturer at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in Plovdiv. From 2021 until now, she has been holding the position of Associate Professor under Professional field 8.1 “Theory of Arts”, specialty “Financial Management and Project Financing”. Kazashka also teaches subjects in Bachelor’s, Master’s, and doctoral programs.

Regarding her research work as an authoritative scientist, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Kazashka is often invited and participates in national and international conferences and forums. She is the author and co-author of a number of published articles and reports in specialized scientific publications related to her scientific and applied interests in the fields of “Management Psychology of Art Organizations and Scientific Organizations”, “Project Financing and Financial Management of Projects”, “Policies and Programs in the Field of Science and Art”, as well as “Work with Children with Special Educational Needs and Art Therapy Practices”. The presented information on publication citations and reviews confirms the high quality of her scientific output. She is the author of 25 publications published between 2019 and 2023, as well as of three books with the titles: *“Inclusive Education – Introduction”* (2019), *“Motivation for Career Development and Teamwork in Modern Research Infrastructure”* (2020), and *“Cultural Policies. Opportunities and Challenges”* (2022). She is also a member of several editorial boards.

Along with her many years of teaching and research activity, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Kazashka is a member of international project teams and the head of several national projects, described in the presented scientometric table. For several years, she has also been leading a department at the Center for Excellence of the Center of Plant Systems Biology and Biotechnology (CBSBB) in Plovdiv.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Kazashka is a member of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria (2019), the Union of Psychologists in Bulgaria (2020), Registered mediator in the Unified Register of Mediators in Bulgaria, Local contact person of the Network of European Researchers EURAXESS (2010), member of the Management Committee of the COST Action CA 22156 – Transformations International Experience and Research Network for Sustainable Futures (TransformERS), as well as member of the Permanent Expert Commission for Monitoring, Evaluation and Analysis of the Scientific Research Activity, carried out by universities and scientific research organizations.

## **General characteristics of the presented scientific works**

In the documentation for the current competition, the candidate has submitted 19 publications, one monograph, one study, one study aid, and 16 scientific articles, 13 of which are independent and three co-authored, related to problem areas in the financial management of art organizations, project activity, and cultural policies.

The presented study *“Motivation for Career Development and Teamwork in Modern Research Infrastructure”*, published in 2020 by Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, investigates the motivation of young researchers engaged in research and development in Bulgaria. Through empirical research, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazashka systematizes the current trends for career development in centers of excellence and clarifies the theoretical and methodological basis for analyzing motivation, career development, and teamwork.

From the volume *“Scientific production for main habilitation thesis”*, the book *“Cultural Policies. Opportunities and Challenges”*, editor: Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, ISBN 978-954-2963-93-6, is presented. It contains an introduction, three interconnected chapters, a conclusion, used literature, including legislative and strategic documents, Bulgarian and foreign literary, as well as electronic sources – a total of 64 pieces. I would like to note that the structure of the habilitation work follows the logic of the theoretical analysis of the normative base at national, European, and global level in the field of cultural policies, in order to outline the applied nature of the recommendations from the evaluation material of the conducted empirical research.

In the habilitation work, emphasis is placed on the study of the challenges and opportunities of cultural policies in Bulgaria. The main goal of the author is to make a theoretical analysis of the normative base related to culture, and through an empirical study, to examine the position of experts in the field of culture. Given the lack of an adopted national strategy for the development of our cultural policy, the consideration of the issue is extremely relevant and timely. The used normative national and European documents not only regulate the development and preservation of culture, but also clearly state the terminology in the field under consideration. On their basis, the author conducts an empirical study, described in the essential second chapter of the monograph. It examines attitudes towards cultural policies through a survey. A survey containing 13 questions was sent to 1,446 respondents using Google Forms. For the purposes of the study, 80 participants were recruited – artists, managers, and experts in the field of culture, representatives of non-governmental art organizations. For the study, the issue of funding mechanisms in the “Culture” sector, which at the state level is mainly project-based and centralized, was not overlooked. With the descriptive analysis of the financial mechanisms from the empirical research, presented in the third chapter, Associate Professor Dr.

Kazashka brings out specific recommendations for effective change, grouped into eight important areas of applicability: regulatory framework, regional policies, inclusive education, control bodies, decentralization of culture, national cultural identity, and participation of individual artists. This not only opens up the critical debate for updating cultural policies, but for me, is an essential contribution to the construction of urgent possible solutions and legislative changes towards a unified vision of a national cultural strategy.

### **Contributions of a scientific and applied nature**

The derived contributions of the habilitation work essentially cover scientific-theoretical and practical-applied aspects. First, against the background of the lack of published works on the topic of sociological research, the study is definitely a valuable source of knowledge not only in the scientific-research field, but also with practical-applied value. Second, it further develops and enriches theoretical statements related to the financing of art and culture in Bulgaria by deriving a terminological apparatus and analyzing the literature. Third, it raises specific issues for new trends in the development of cultural policies and practices. Fourth, it develops an in-depth research questionnaire distributed among art managers, on the basis of which further development and documentary data can be collected in the future.

The main contributions do not concern only the habilitation thesis, but also the candidate's overall research and pedagogical activity for the development of the scientific, applied, and educational spheres, as far as her author's view is concerned, aimed at researching a specific area in the cultural sphere – project financing. In this regard, among the main merits of the scientific production is its scientific-applied orientation not only for specialists and researchers, but also for students with focused interests in the development and realization of the arts.

Along with the above, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kazashka clearly follows the paradigm “science, culture, and education for the benefit of society” not only by conducting empirical research and analyzing it, but also by her active involvement as the initiator and manager of a number of projects. She is a beloved and proven educator, public figure, and researcher.

Bearing in mind the presented contributions, concepts, and objects of the research field in the presented main habilitation work *“Cultural Policies. Opportunities and Challenges”*, the overall research activity, the long-term teaching experience, as well as the personal professional qualities of the candidate, give me a reason to give my **positive assessment and to propose to the esteemed Jury that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesela Stoyanova Kazashka be elected to the academic position “Professor”** under Professional field 8.1 “Theory of Arts” /specialty “Financial Management and Project Financing”/ for the needs of the Theory of Arts Department at Prof. Asen Diamandiev Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv.

10.02.2024

MEMBER OF THE JURY:

/Prof. Dr. Emiliya Konstantinova/