

REVIEW

by **Prof. Dr. Lyubomir Ivanov Karadzhov,**
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Regarding the application of Vesela Stoyanova Kazashka
for competition, announced by AMDFA Prof. Assen Diamandiev
for the academic position of *associate professor*
in Area of higher education: 8. Arts;
Professional field: 8.1. Theory of Arts;
Scientific major: Management and Project Finance

Assistant Professor Vesela Stoyanova Kazashka, PhD, is the only candidate in the competition announced in the State Gazette, issue. 40 of 17.05.2019 for the position of *associate professor* in the scientific specialty *Management and Project Finance* at the Department of Choreography at the Faculty of Music Folklore and Choreography of AMDFA Prof. Assen Diamandiev.

The set of documents and materials submitted to the scientific jury is in accordance with the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and includes administrative documents and documents related to the applicant's scientific research and applied activities.

Vesela Stoyanova Kazashka was born on 14.11.1971. In 1989 she graduated from the High School of Economics *Vasil Levski*, now National High School of Commerce - Plovdiv. In the period 1992-1998 she obtained a master's degree in Bulgarian and Russian Languages at Plovdiv University *Paisii Hilendarski* with the qualification Teacher of Bulgarian language and literature and a teacher of Russian language and literature. Later, between 1999 and 2001, Vesela Kazashka graduated from the Plovdiv University *Paisii Hilendarski* with a Master's degree in Macroeconomics majoring in *Accounting Organization and Technology*.

In 2011 she started her PhD in special-needs education at PU *Paisii Hilendarski* in Area of higher education 1.1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy. In 2014, Kazashka successfully defended her doctoral dissertation on the topic *Positive stigma to people with disabilities*, thus acquiring PhD degree.

In the meantime, Vesela Kazashka worked as a high school teacher of Bulgarian language and literature and was an expert in accounting in court procedures. In the period 2001-2012 she held the position of Director of the *Scientific and Applied Activities* Unit at Plovdiv University *Paisii Hilendarski*. Since 2015, she has been the head of the Centre for Professional Training at AMDFA where she organizes the work with students and doctoral students. From 2016 until now she has been teaching at AMDFA *Prof. Assen Diamandiev*.

The documentation submitted for participation in the competition demonstrates impressive administrative, scientific and practical activity of Vesela Kazashka, both before obtaining her doctoral degree in 2014 and later on.

Prior to 2014, Kazashka completed an internship under the Erasmus program at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic and at the Tula State University of Psychology and Pedagogy in Tula, Russia. I found documentary evidence of Kazashka's involvement over the last 10 years as a member of project teams, including projects funded by the European Social Fund's OP Human Resources Development - "*Students on the Path to Book Publishing*" and "*Practical Training for Students-Future Psychologists*" in 2009; by European Social Fund's OP Human Resources Development - 2012; Erasmus program 2014-2015.

In addition, during the period 2011-2015, Vesela Kazashka was in charge of international projects of Plovdiv University, including those within the European Territorial Cooperation, Operational Program Greece-Bulgaria, 2007-2013 and the Horizon 2020 program, "Researchers in the Knowledge Triangle", 2014-2015"

Assist. Prof. Vesela Kazashka participates in the competition announced by the AMDFA *Prof. Assen Diamandiev* for the academic position of *associate professor* with the habilitation thesis-monograph *Plovdiv – art-organizations and their management profile*, ISBN 978-954-2963-38-7, edition of the AMDFA, 2018.

The habilitation thesis is co-authored with Vasil Kolev and Margarita Ruseva. A separate statement is attached to the monograph, according to which the three authors state "on the basis of item 5 of the notes to the Appendix to Article 1a, paragraph 1 of the Regulations for the Application of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria", that "the work is the result of a common study with equal participation of each of the authors in the writing, design and contribution of the latter. The monograph is a volume of 358 pages with a minimum of 1800 characters per page (average), with each author having 119 (one hundred and nineteen) pages of their own."

In view of the principles laid down in the cited division statement, the share of Vesela Kazashka of the monograph presented as a habilitation thesis fits in and exceeds in amount the formal requirements for a monograph stated in the ADASRB,

As a mandatory requirement, the work was reviewed by reviewers, in this case three, namely Prof. Dr. Svetlana Saykova, Assoc. Prof. Momchil Georgiev, PhD, Assoc. Prof. Angel Dimitrov, PhD. The texts of the reviews are attached as an integral part of the habilitation thesis on page 359 through 378 inclusive.

The work *Plovdiv – Art-organizations and their Management Profile* is a thorough study of the development, financing and management of institutions in the field of art in Plovdiv. This makes the scientific work a useful read for art managers both in Plovdiv and in Bulgaria, since the issues it discusses correspond also with the processes taking place in other cities of Bulgaria. The focus is on "creative economy" - a sector most commonly defined in our country as "cultural industries" and "creative industries", which has become a priority of the European Union, especially with the emphasis put on it in strategic documents, such as the *Lisbon Strategy* and *Europe 2020*. From this point of view, the monograph correctly notes that the creative economy combines the five directions of "the evolutionary and emotional development of man and society", namely, "the art of applying creative teachings and the imagination of man to create beauty and emotions, science - reason, theory, technology and innovation as creations of human intelligence; education - training, inheritance of knowledge, transfer of experience and knowledge, creation of attitude towards learning; culture - a sense of identity and belonging, and last but not least, an individual's personal development.

The first chapter of the monograph is entitled "*Plovdiv - the development of art and culture in the city over the centuries*" (pp. 24-104 incl.). It offers a historical overview of the processes in arts and culture since the founding of the city by the Thracians; emphasizes important anniversaries in the cultural calendar related to our recent history and explores the issue of archaeological heritage on the territory of the centuries-old city, including some of the most up-to-date sites such as the Small Basilica and the Episcopal Basilica of Philippopolis (aka The Great Basilica), the mosaics at the *Trakart* Cultural Centre and more. In the context of this analysis, the monograph focuses on the Architectural and Historical Reserve *Old town* (Plovdiv), *Kapana* as a recognised neighbourhood of the creative industries; libraries, museums, galleries, *chitalista* (community centres) and printing houses. I think the presence of printing houses in this monograph is something positive, since they somehow always

remain out of the scope of such studies, however, in Plovdiv they are active value-generating economic entities. In addition to contributing to business development, they are in their nature a factor which joins together economic and cultural energy. According to a document issued by the Regional Branch of the NSI as of March 2017, a total of 120 printing houses, registered on the territory of the city of Plovdiv, contributed to the "creative economy" of the city.

The study presents music, theatre and opera as dominant in Plovdiv's cultural life, and also includes leading art projects and festivals.

The monograph deals mainly with the types of and approaches to management intended to promote the sales of creative and artistic products. The authors state that "in the absence of precise planning, good organization, creative management and control in the process of implementation of a project, its chances of success sharply decrease." The study focuses on planning as the first function of management; and also on the organization, leadership and control of the management processes.

Without being explicitly differentiated in the contents, there is an interesting part of the study, namely, *"Art and management on the timeline of history"* (p. 67), where a general overview of the forms of art-management that have been in use since antiquity is made. It goes through the Middle Ages, taking into account the significant influence of the church – as a mentor, maecenas and ideologist – on the artistic processes; as well as the role of the feudal aristocracy as a benefactor for the creation and preservation of art objects and organizer of performances. The text specifies aspects of the management of these events, assigned by the city governor or local judge, who were "in the role of patrons of the actors/artists and were responsible for every phase of the event." The overview of these processes, including, for example, the later formation of a free market for works of fine art in the Netherlands, provides additional scope and completeness to the issues discussed.

In the section *"Financing of organizations. State policies and programs for the period 2007-2018, project financing"* I accept as an appropriate emphasis the text devoted to the option of additional financing of art-organizations through the development of projects – a topic that is among the strengths of Vesela Kazashka. After discussing the three models of arts funding - the state aid model for the arts, the arts development model in the conditions of free market economy, and the mixed arts management model (pp. 78-79), the study concludes that "the opportunities for additional financing of art organizations through the development of

projects, as well as the trend for financing based on projects, confronts art managers with new requirements: to be familiar with the techniques and methods of a relatively new type of management, namely project management. At the same time, the study also raises an issue that art-organizations face: Do they have to hire certain specialists, set up project management units or departments, or rather the specific project-related skills should become part of the job description of art-managers?

My practice in the field of art management and teaching show that art managers today are not well prepared in this field. During lectures, many of the Master's students admit their unawareness about this subject matter, and the practicing art-managers among the students are not an exception. They are fully aware that the existing under-financing of the art sector requires high quality project development skills that would provide fresh capital other than the government funding, sponsorship contracts, and advertising contracts. Such type of targeted financing can enrich the material assets, give way to bolder creative decisions, open up the possibility for artistic experiments whose success or failure do not depend on state or municipal budgets.

From this point of view, the study motivates art managers to pay particular attention to project development skills or outsource the project development. This, as correctly stated in the publication, will be useful for financing artistic activities and for the expansion and enrichment of creative ideas and practices.

The second chapter of the monograph, entitled "*Financial Management and Control*" (pp. 105-258), deals with the regulatory framework and control bodies, the main elements of financial management and the mission and vision of art-organization. The main planning activities in art-organizations are discussed, including the provision and allocation of resources, control, management of risk, information, communication etc.

A strength of the study is the discussion of the mission and vision of art-organizations, which are considered a direct responsibility of the managers dealing in "activities related to the functioning and achievement of the organization's goals, including those activities related to the establishment, maintenance and documenting of a financial management and control system."

In working with students in the *Art Management and PR of Art Organizations* Master's programmes at AMDFA, flaws are often identified in the clear and accurate definition of the mission and vision of organizations in which students work or even manage. Art-managers

find it difficult to state the mission of their institutions. The lack of clearly defined social and typically professional responsibilities, the absence of a definition of the role of art as a bridge between art-organizations and the specific artistic needs of society are a managerial problem reasonably addressed by the monograph.

The third chapter of the monograph (pp. 259-345) is an empirical study motivated by the ever-changing and complex environment in which the cultural industries work and targeted at "better understanding and identifying the new skills they need at present or will need in the near future". The research is conducted in four stages: mapping of creative industries, guidelines for development planning, organization and implementation, monitoring and control. The toolkit used is the conduct of a survey among the employees of the cultural industries in Plovdiv. In the authors' opinion "this approach allows to expand the knowledge and potential of the creative and cultural industries, to make an assessment and to select appropriate business models for management and financing of art-organizations".

The analysis presented by the authors provides a realistic snapshot of the state of the cultural economy of the city-cultural capital of Europe in 2019. I find interesting the information in the monograph that according to managers' opinion 71.8% of the institutions they manage belong to the performing arts, 15.4% - to the visual arts, 7.7% - to the cultural and historical heritage and only 5.1% of the managers have the self-perception of managers of institutions linking art, culture, education and new technologies.

According to the survey, 57.5% of the art-organizations are state-owned and 42.5% are private. This distribution shows that the cultural sector still does not feel secure without centralized support, and the path of private financing involve risks for the cultural entrepreneurs. The ratio between the of state and private shares in the cultural sector of economy, on the one hand, prove the ambition of the state to impose policies and public doctrines by supporting institutions considered of strategic importance for arts and culture. On the other hand, however, the question arises: Is it the lack of management strategies or is it defects in the business environment that create the existing financial difficulties on the free market of art?

From this perspective, the text logically examines the status of project activities and the ability of managers to absorb additional financial flows through project development. In the survey 53.8% of the organizations stated that they have won "up to 5 projects" in the last ten years and only 30.5% of them have implemented more than 10 projects.

Based on the analyses presented in the study, the monograph urges the need for measures and policies that focus on various aspects of the short- and long-term activities of art-organizations. These include the need to promote cultural innovation; improvement of the access to finance for new business models; development of managers' business skills, etc. This, according to the monograph, is due to the lack of information for the successful development of the cultural industries; about the system of support for small and medium-sized enterprises at the local level; the lack of conditions for facilitation and support of the promotion of cultural products on the domestic market and other factors.

I accept the summary of the monograph submitted by Vesela Kazashka, which in its volume of 7 pages correctly reflects the merits of the study.

I consider the contributions, both theoretical and practical ones, defined by Kazashka to be accurate and comprehensive. The fact that for the first time the specific managerial profile and peculiar features of 105 art-organizations in the city of Plovdiv was researched and analysed for the period 2016-2018 makes the scientific thesis valuable and topical.

My recommendation is, in other cases of co-authorship, if the texts are intended for participation in competitions for academic positions, and it is necessary to give opinion on a specific author, the content of the division statement signed by the co-authors should specify exactly which parts of the research belong to whom.

In this line of thought, I consider as particularly useful, distinguishing and concretizing the activities of Vesela Kazashka, the "*General reference with additional information and evidence*" enclosed by her. It shows that since the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree PhD in 2014 she has authored 12 publications, three of which are under the respectable brand of *Web of Science* and the rest are published in reputable Bulgarian and foreign languages editions. The citations of Kazashka's publications (8 in number) which meet the formal requirements; participation in 4 significant projects in the regarded period; the development of curricula in *Financial Management and Control, Inclusive Education, Russian, and Economics*; her membership in editorial boards; membership in scientific organizations, including the Union of Scientists; the management and conduct of seminars and active administrative activity outline explicitly a focussed and active colleague with experience and specific knowledge in the subject matter of the announced competition for the academic position of associate professor.

It is noteworthy that the topics of the candidate's publications are in a wide scientific range - pedagogy, art, management, higher education. Kazashka's reports and articles tackle specific features of higher education in the field of arts, analyse cultural industries in Plovdiv, present the specific profile of art-organizations in Plovdiv, comment on the educational environment of the modern university in the context of risk science. Such a polyphony of topics points to a specialist with a broad view on the different sides of the material taught, and a researcher who is capable of interpreting interdisciplinary connections which are so useful in academic activity.

In conclusion, I can summarize that the documents and publications submitted by the only candidate in the competition for *associate professor* in the field of *Management and Project Finance* at the Department of Choreography of the Faculty of Music Folklore and Choreography at AMDFA Prof. Assen Diamandiev Vesela Kazashka meet the minimum national requirements. I do not identify presence of plagiarism. The topic of the monograph is in line with the competition announced.

In view of all the above, I give my positive assessment of the teaching, scientific, practical and administrative activities of Assistant Professor Vesela Kazashka. I recommend and vote in favour of the preparation by the Scientific Jury of a proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Musical Folklore and Choreography for the selection of Vesela Stoyanova Kazashka for the academic position of *associate professor* in Area of higher Education 8. Arts; professional field 8.1. Art Theory, scientific major *Management and Project Finance*.

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Prepared by:

Plovdiv

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