

REVIEW

on the materials submitted for the competition for the academic position of **Professor** in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.7. Administration and Management, scientific specialty "Economics and Management" in the discipline "Economics and Management of Landscape Architecture".

In the competition for professor, announced in the State Gazette No. 10/ 04.02.2025 and on the LTU website with the procedure code FOR-P-0125-157. for the needs of the Department of Forest Management at the Faculty of Forestry, the only candidate is **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elena Ilieva Dragozova**, Faculty of Forestry, Department of Forest Management.

Reviewer: Doctor, Valentin Kirillov Velev, Professor, Professional field of Economics, from University of Mining and Geology, retired.

1. Short biographical data about the candidate

The only candidate in the competition for professor, Assoc. Elena Ilieva Dragozova is a graduated Landscape Architect with a Master's degree since 1997 at the Latvian Technical University. Until 2003 she worked in the real economy, as an accountant and office coordinator, landscape architect and deputy manager in the Management of a shopping complex. From 2003 to 2005 she was a teaching organizer in the department of LTU. She has been a member of the academic community since 2005, when she was elected as an Assistant Professor and successively held the positions of Assistant, Senior and Principal Assistant Professor in the Department of Resource and Environmental Management of the Faculty of Business Administration. In 2012 he obtained his PhD, defending his dissertation on "**Study of the model for management of landscape architectural activity in green systems of cities**". During this period, he has taught classes in key educational disciplines and has been the holder of two lecture courses. Concrete and implicit evaluations of the activity are positive and reflect the candidate's thorough and systematic development, consistent upgrading of knowledge, broadening of experience and deepening of scientific capacity.

Logically, the integrated evaluation of the educational, teaching and scientific process gave the competent university authorities the reason to announce a competition for associate professor in 2016, the procedure of which ended with a unanimous evaluation of the head as. Dragozova to be elected Associate Professor. From 2019 to 2023 she is the Head of the Department of Resource Management and Use of Natural Resources of the LTU, and from 2024 she is the Vice-Rector of the LTU. Throughout this 20-year period, Assoc. Dragozova has been performing her academic duties in teaching, scientific and administrative activities with high professionalism, which is logically reflected in her career development. The foregoing on professional development, the volume of works submitted for the competition and the availability of the required lectureship for the competition in aggregate indicate that the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act of the Republic of Bulgaria and its Regulations, and of the Minimum National Requirements (MNR) for holding the academic position of Professor have been satisfied.

2. Conformity of the submitted documents and materials of the candidate with the required ones according to the Regulations for the DAS at LTU.

My perusal of the materials submitted for the competition and their comparison with the requirements of the Regulations for the DAS at LTU (Articles 65 and 65a) showed that there were no gaps or contradictions in the set of documents. The minimum requirements of the LTU for the academic position of professor have also been satisfied. This leads me to state that there is the necessary compliance of the materials submitted for the competition with the requirements of the procedures for the academic post of professor. The answer to the final result is to be found in the assessment of the content of the published scientific and teaching materials submitted, which is yet to be made.

3. Evaluation of the candidate's teaching and learning activities (work with undergraduate and postgraduate students)

Without attempting to divide the weights by the importance of the main activities forming the image of the modern university process, I maintain the position that without educational activities, realized through meaningful classroom and practical training, any academic career development loses part of its social significance. So what is the meaning of research and the materials published on it if they do not find a place in the educational work with students and postgraduates. In this sense, it is with great satisfaction that I perceive the extraordinary dedication of Assoc. Dragozova's dedication to teaching and the development of her own model for educational communication with students, in which academic postulates are skillfully intertwined with the challenges of modern times. With an awareness of these realities, the candidate has successfully participated in the development of curricula in the disciplines of Economics and Management of Landscape Architecture; Management; Organizational Behavior; Human Resource Management, Economics and Environmental Management and Business Communications and Public Relations. In some of the disciplines, teaching materials have been developed and are used in an accessible form (printed or electronic) in the teaching process of engineering, economics and management education. The adaptability of Assoc. Dragozova's adaptability to the current changes in university education, especially in technical universities. Assoc. Dragozova works successfully and intensively with students outside the classical classroom forms. Under her guidance 18 students have successfully graduated. She is a scientific supervisor of 3 PhD students, one successfully defended and 2 in the process of developing their dissertation. Her work with students on their introduction to the real economy has been appreciated by external institutions, which have nominated her with a Gold Medal in the national competition of Junior Achievement "Best Learning Company of Bulgaria for Students" for 2015; Best Team Award in the national competition of Junior Achievement "Best Learning Company of Bulgaria for Students" for 2017.

From the above it can be concluded that the candidate is committed to teaching and learning activities that are worthy of emulation.

4. Evaluation of the candidate's scientific, applied and publication activity. General description of the submitted materials.

For participation in the competition Assoc. Dragozova has submitted 23 publications classified as follows:

Printed monographs – 2 pcs; Printed textbook - 1 pcs; Printed and in electronic version textbook - 1 pcs.

Publications (articles and reports) - 21 pcs, including:

In foreign refereed journals with impact factor - 5 pcs.

In Bulgarian refereed journals - 2 pcs.

In non-refereed journals with scientific peer review – 14 pcs.

The presented scientific production is in sufficient volume and reflects research after the period of the first habilitation. It does not repeat those for obtaining the PhD and for holding the academic position of Associate Professor.

4.1 Participation in scientific, applied scientific and educational projects

Some of the publications mentioned are a reflection of the projects in which the candidate has participated, while others have found application in the implementation of applied scientific and educational research. From the attached materials, participation in 5 projects can be indicated. One of them is multinational and one of them is a scientific supervisor. Thematically and content-wise, the projects fully cover the field of the candidate's scientific interests, which undoubtedly shows that there are objective prerequisites for participation in them. Indicative in this respect are the projects under the titles:

- **"Future-oriented sustainable management of forest landscapes in Europe"-
INTEGRAL,**

- **"Decision support for policy and management of forest biodiversity conservation and restoration in Europe: trade-offs and synergies in the relationship between forests, biodiversity, climate and water (BIOCONSENT)"**

- **"Assessment of the ecosystem service "water" provided by protected forest areas in Bulgaria".**

To the participation in these meaningful scientific and applied projects should be taken into account the participation and leadership of projects with educational orientation:

- **„ Research, analysis and modeling of educational competencies (acquired in specialties of the Latvian Technical University) in accordance with the profiles of competencies by positions of the NQF" - leader.**

- **"Development of interdisciplinary teams of young researchers in the field of basic and applied research relevant to medical practice"**

There is also involvement in highly responsible expert work in her area of expertise. These activities point to the existence of established competences in the field of ecosystem and forest management as a fundamental part of them, which is appreciated by various users from science and practice.

4.2 Characteristics of the published scientific results

The presented list of 23 publications contains articles and reports printed in prestigious journals and proceedings of international and national scientific forums.

The majority of them are independent (4 items) with one co-author (10) and the rest with two or more co-authors.

The publications are in Bulgarian (13) and foreign (10), 7 of them with Impact factor.

The above reflects a variety of publication activity related to the specific research activity of the candidate.

4.3 Reflection of the candidate's scientific publications in the literature (known citations)

These publications have been the subject of attention of a number of specialists in the research field, with 36 citations listed. Of these, 15 are from authors of articles and papers in refereed journals and proceedings of scientific forums. The remaining 7 are in monographs. These citations show that the scientific activity of the candidate is known to specialists in science and practice and has found application in the scientific activity of other authors.

4.4 Contributions in the candidate's works (scientific, scientifically applied, applied)

The summaries and formulations of scientific, scientifically applied and applied contributions presented by the candidate correctly reflect the aims, objectives and results of the research and teaching activities. They are predominantly based on a large body of knowledge and experience that have been creatively developed and enriched. At the same time, directions for research arising from contemporary challenges to landscape architecture for the harmonious development of society are traced.

In summary, my acknowledged contributions have the following scientific content:

1. Developing and obtaining specific tools for the formulation of the content in the professional competencies of the specialist "landscape architect"; for their implementation in the human resource management system in accordance with the need for harmonious development of green infrastructure. (*B3.1.; I7.2.; I7.4.; I7.5; I7.7*)
2. The necessity of applying a competency-based approach for effective professional realization as a prerequisite and means for optimal management of the components of modern society is justified. (*I7.3.; I7.8.; I7.10*)
3. Training models have been adapted to build competencies for optimal management in green infrastructure development. (*I7.2.; I7.4.; I7.6.; I7.1.*)

4. A toolkit has been proposed and research results have been obtained and synthesized on different alternatives for the development of green infrastructure to maintain sustainability between economic, social and environmental systems. (*I7.11.; I7.12.; I7.13.*)
5. Approaches are proposed to determine the influence of key factors and stakeholder behaviour in green infrastructure management on ecosystem functions and services. (*I6.1.; I6.5.; I6.7.; I7.2.; I7.3.; I7.6.; I7.9.*)

As scientific and applied contributions I accept:

1. I have developed an approach and a survey toolkit for continuous assessment and monitoring of the competence of the landscape architect by comparing the educational level in practical terms in accordance with changes in the labour market (*B3.1.; I7.4.*)
2. The necessity of regulating the profession "Landscape Architect" is justified and competence profiles for the specialty "Landscape Architecture", for the M.Sc. and for the Ph.D. are developed. (*I7.14*)
3. A research toolkit is proposed and validated to investigate the motivation and satisfaction of employees in higher education institutions. (*I4.1*)

5. Evaluation of the personal contribution of the candidate

My thorough acquaintance with the works of the candidate for professor, has not caused any doubt that they faithfully reflect the results of his long and consistent scientific work. The presence of co-authors in some of the publications I define positively. It is a reflection of the opportunity for teamwork in research and for broadening and deepening its content. In this sense, I accept that the production as a whole is the personal work of the candidate.

6. Critical remarks

Considering, the national and internal university requirements and the evaluations I have formulated above, I cannot find and define any shortcomings that put into question the qualities of Assoc. Dragozova and the value of the published scientific materials. As my main recommendation I wish that in her future activities she focuses on building a modern research school with the involvement of undergraduate students, postgraduate students and academic colleagues. This will provide the impetus for new research endeavours and prove that the acquisition of the academic position of professor is just a new beginning.

7. Personal impressions

I know Assoc. Dragozova in her academic profile since the defense of her dissertation. During these years my impressions are a reflection of joint participations in a number of scientific forums. So far, there is no case that casts a stain on the scientific, teaching and administrative activities of the candidate in the competition. I particularly appreciate the objective rather than

careerist advancement in academia so clearly expressed in her case. I am pleased to note that in this competition we are assessing a candidate who has built a consistent record of relying on a continuous build-up of knowledge and experience.

8. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, I declare my full satisfaction with the participation in the NW competition, with the quantity and quality of the peer-reviewed scientific production. The absence of procedural shortcomings, combined with the results of the professional evaluation of the candidate, is the basis for giving a positive assessment. I propose that the members of the JW unanimously unite around the proposal that the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Forestry elect Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elena Ilieva Dragozova as "Professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.7. Administration and Management, scientific specialty "Economics and Management".

Reviewer's signature:

The review was submitted to: 25.04.2025