OPINION

by

Associate Professor Deyan Minkov Hadzhiyski, PhD,

University of Agribusiness and Rural Development – Plovdiv

on the materials submitted for participation in the competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor” in Professional Field 3.7 Administration and Management, scientific specialty “Conflict Management”. The competition was announced in State Gazette No. 30 of 27 March 2026 and on the website of UARD – Plovdiv. The candidate is **Neli Nikolova Simeonova-Petrova, PhD.**

1. Brief biographical information

The candidate graduated from Hristo Prodanov Secondary School, Karlovo, in 1998. In 2002 she obtained a Bachelor's degree from Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv and in 2003 a Master's degree in Accounting and Analysis from the same university. In 2017 she obtained a second Master's degree in Health Management from the University of Agribusiness and Rural Development, Plovdiv.

In 2025 she was awarded the educational and scientific degree Doctor (PhD) in Higher Education Area 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Professional Field 3.7 Administration and Management, scientific specialty Health Management. Her dissertation, entitled “Study of Management Methods for Preventing and Resolving Conflicts among Employees in Healthcare Institutions”, was defended at the University of Security and Economics, Plovdiv.

Her professional experience includes serving as Manager of Hisar Medical Centre (2020–2021). Since 2021 she has been Director of the College of Healthcare and Economics, Sofia.

2. General description of the submitted materials

The candidate participates with 2 monographs, 15 scientific articles, and no studies, conference papers or books.

3. Impact of the scientific publications

The identified citations in monographs and peer-reviewed collective volumes demonstrate recognition of the candidate's research. Together with citations in peer-reviewed journals, they satisfy the minimum national requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor.

4. General assessment

An original conceptual framework for conflict management in healthcare has been developed, taking into account the specific characteristics of medical practice, hierarchical organisational structures and the intensive interpersonal interaction within healthcare institutions.

The research results have not yet been implemented in practice to my knowledge; however, they possess considerable potential for practical application, particularly in managing the challenges of the Bulgarian healthcare system.

The main scientific contributions include: an integrated model linking communication, conflict and organisational effectiveness; the first comprehensive empirical study in Bulgaria of the relationships between communication quality, staff turnover, conflict, healthcare quality and institutional image; a methodological toolkit for assessing communication processes, conflict characteristics and management practices; identification of new relationships between management approaches, organisational climate and staff effectiveness; and innovative management solutions for conflict prevention, internal communication and multicultural team management.

5. Assessment of the candidate's personal contribution

I accept that the reported contributions are the candidate's own work. The submitted publications clearly demonstrate independent scientific research. They reveal a researcher with well-defined scientific interests, consistency in research and an established academic profile. The candidate not only fulfils but exceeds the minimum national requirements under Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Academic Staff Development Act of the Republic of Bulgaria.

6. Critical remarks

I have no substantial critical remarks regarding the candidate's scientific or teaching activities. I recommend increasing publications indexed in Scopus and Web of Science to improve international visibility and citation impact.

7. Conclusion

Based on the above, I recommend that Neli Nikolova Simeonova-Petrova, PhD, be elected to the academic position of Associate Professor in Professional Field 3.7 Administration and Management, scientific specialty Conflict Management, for the needs of the Department of Regional Development, Agribusiness and Tourism, Department of Economics and Management.

01.07.2026

Member of the Jury:

Associate Professor PhD Deyan Hadzhiyski