

STATMENT

by Prof. Sonya Karabeliova, D.Sc.

regarding the competition for the academic position of “**Associate Professor**” in Higher Education Area 3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences, Field of Study 3.2. Psychology (Work and Organizational Psychology), for the needs of the International Business School,

announced in State Gazette No. 8 of 28.01.2025.

Basis for the opinion: Order No. 032 dated 31.03.2025 of the Rector of the International Business School of Bulgaria.

1. General Information

One candidate is participating in the competition: Chief Assistant Dr. Irina Topuzova from the International Business School.

Irina Topuzova completed her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Psychology at the South-West University "Neofit Rilski" in 2007 and 2010, respectively, with a specialization in Legal Psychology. In 2016, she successfully defended her dissertation and was awarded the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in Professional Field 3.2. Psychology (Occupational Psychology and Professional Psychodiagnostics).

From 2007 to 2015, Irina Topuzova worked as a Head of the Dean's Office at the Faculty of Philosophy at the South-West University "Neofit Rilski." In 2016, she was appointed Assistant in Professional Field 3.2. Psychology (Occupational and Organizational Psychology) in the Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Philosophy of the same university. From 2018 until November 2021, she served as Chief Assistant in the same department. Since November 2021, she has been a Chief Assistant at the International Business School.

2. Habilitation Work

For the purposes of the competition, Chief Assistant Dr. Irina Topuzova presents her habilitation work — a monograph entitled "Organizational Culture and Leadership: The Cultural Leadership Code." The work meets all requirements for a monograph and **fully aligns with the subject of the announced competition**. This provides a basis for concluding that **Chief Assistant Dr. I. Topuzova** fulfills the requirements set by the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB), its Regulations, and the Rules for Academic Positions at IBS.

3. Fulfillment of the Minimum National Requirements for the Academic Position "Associate Professor"

Chief Assistant Dr. Irina Topuzova provides a summary with corresponding supporting materials. It is evident from the documentation that Dr. I. Topuzova meets the minimum national requirements according to the Regulations for the Application of the ADASRB (amended in State Gazette No. 15 of 19.02.2019, Table 1, Area 3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences, Field 3.2. Psychology). Specifically: For groups A, B, and C (Indicators 1, 2, and 3), she has accumulated the required 150 points, having earned the "Doctor" degree (50 points) and presented a habilitation work (100 points). For Group D (Indicators 4 to 10), candidates must have at least 200 points from publications. Based on Dr. Topuzova's summary, her publications account for 248.05 points. Additionally, according to the Regulations, a candidate must have at least 50 points from citations. The summary shows that Dr. Topuzova has 165 points from citations.

4. Publications

Chief Assistant Dr. Topuzova submits a detailed list of scientific works related to the competition's topic, comprising: two monographs related to the competition's subject; one chapter in a collective monograph; a published book based on her doctoral dissertation; one independent study in a refereed journal; one co-authored study in a refereed and indexed journal; six articles in refereed journals (four in Bulgarian and two in English), with three being sole-authored and three co-authored; two co-authored articles in refereed and indexed journals in global scientific databases; two articles in English published in scientific journals indexed in globally recognized scientific databases.

The presented scientific works have not been submitted for previous academic titles or positions.

5. Research Activities and Scientific Contributions

The scientific publications submitted by Chief Assistant Dr. Irina Topuzova are entirely within the scope of the competition's announced topic.

Special attention is drawn to the main monograph "Organizational Culture and Leadership: The Cultural Leadership Code," which frames the cultural characteristics of organizations and leadership practices. The focus is on theoretically grounded and empirically established optimal combinations between organizational cultural profiles

and specific leadership styles, which under ideal conditions may follow a logically predictable model.

The author introduces the concept of the cultural leadership code, defining its essence, significance, and historical development. The processes of forming the cultural leadership code and its influence on organizational effectiveness are elucidated. The interpretation also addresses specific situations where the mismatch between dominant organizational culture and the chosen leadership approach can be inevitable and even functional for addressing particular challenges.

The methodology for developing a typology of cultural leadership codes, including the methods and approaches for their classification and differentiation, is described. Different types of cultural leadership codes are presented, facilitating a more precise understanding of the relationships between cultural characteristics and leadership practices in various organizational contexts. Emphasis is placed on the specific parameters determining the effectiveness of leadership interventions.

Furthermore, cultural leadership codes are analyzed in the context of cross-cultural differences, based on Hofstede's theoretical and empirical model regarding the impact of national cultural characteristics on leadership practices.

The specific dimensions of the cultural leadership code and the personality traits of leaders influencing adaptation and development processes are also discussed. An analysis is made of the emergence and adaptation of cultural leadership codes in both the private and public sectors, particularly in conditions of crisis and organizational transformation. The significance of an integrative approach to managing organizational culture through adaptive leadership interventions is emphasized.

The monograph demonstrates that real organizational conditions demand flexible and innovative solutions capable of responding to the complexity and dynamism of the modern environment.

Other publications address key issues such as psychological dimensions of organizational effectiveness, career development, motivation management, specifically including a model for motivational diagnosis in a university environment. Publications also focus on organizational commitment in both online and physical environments, stress coping strategies, and human resource management practices in academic settings.

This indicates the applied nature of the publications, which can be seen as contributions to developing programs for enhancing motivation and organizational effectiveness.

The publications demonstrate that Dr. Irina Topuzova is establishing herself as an indisputable and competent scholar with an independent presence in the academic community.

I fully accept the contributions of Chief Assistant Dr. I. Topuzova, which can be summarized as follows:

1. The presented scientific works characterize Dr. Topuzova as a researcher with strong interest not only in theoretical analysis and empirical studies but also in the practical-applied aspects of work. The main contribution lies in enriching the theoretical-applied and methodological aspects of approaches for defining and assessing the cultural leadership code.
2. A common feature of the scientific publications is the interpretation of ideas and concepts across three meta-objects of psychological knowledge: theory, method, and experiment understood as practical action.
3. Each publication addresses a significant real-world object or principle of psychological science, with the research activity firmly integrating theory-method-action, indicating strong methodological literacy.
4. The publications reliably correspond to both the scientific achievements of psychology and the practical wisdom of human experience.
5. The accumulated factual evidence from numerous studies reflects various areas of occupational and organizational psychology.

CONCLUSION

Chief Assistant Dr. Irina Topuzova meets all the requirements of the ADASRB and its implementing regulations, both at the national level and at the International Business School. Her entire scholarly work offers a comprehensive, systematic, and profound analysis of achievements in the field of occupational and organizational psychology, filtered through her original interpretation.

As a result of the high evaluation of her research activity, I categorically support her appointment to the academic position of "Associate Professor" in Professional Field 3.2. Psychology (Work and Organizational Psychology) at the International Business School.

30.04.2025

Sofia

Reviewer:

(Prof. Sonya Karabeliova, D.Sc.)