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OPINION

by Prof. Antoaneta Hristova, Ph.D.

Professional Field 3.2. Psychology

Member of the scientific jury appointed by Order No. RD-6-541 of September 16, 2026, of the Director of the Institute for Population and Human Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (IPHS–BAS) regarding: the scientific works and materials submitted for participation in the competition for the academic position of "PROFESSOR" in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.2. Psychology (Health and Developmental Psychology), announced in the State Gazette, Issue No. 65 of July 17, 2026, for the needs of the "Developmental and Health Psychology" Section at the Institute for Population and Human Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Anna Alexandrova Alexandrova-Karamonova is the sole candidate in the competition for the position of professor. She is an associate professor in the "Developmental and Health Psychology" section of the Department of Psychology at the Institute for Population and Human Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

Brief biographical note:

Associate Professor Anna Alexandrova-Karamonova, Ph.D., has a consistent track record of academic and professional development in the field of psychology.

She completed her higher education by earning a master's degree in psychology from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (2002) with three specialized tracks: "Clinical and Counseling," "Developmental Psychology," and "Work and Organizational Psychology." She defended her doctoral dissertation in "General Psychology" at the Institute of Human Sciences—Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (2013) on a topic related to the influence of the media on body image among adolescents.

She began her career in 2003 as a research psychologist and coordinator of international projects at the "Psychology and Health" Foundation. She has worked at the Institute of Social and Human Sciences (ISHS) at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS) for over 13 years, serving as a senior research assistant (2013–2020), and since June 2020, she has been an associate professor of health and developmental psychology.

Anna Karamanova has been Director of the National School for Doctoral Students and Young Researchers in the Social Sciences (since 2021). She is the director of the doctoral programs in "Developmental and Educational Psychology" (2020–2025) and "Health Psychology" (since 2025). She is a member of the Scientific Council of the Institute of Psychology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (since 2023) and an expert with the National Agency for Academic Accreditation and Evaluation (NAAAE) for program accreditation (2022).

General Assessment of the Research Output and Compliance with Minimum National and Institutional Requirements:

The research output of Assoc. Prof. Anna Aleksandrova-Karamonova, Ph.D., fully meets the requirements of the competition and is distinguished by its methodological rigor. All 21 scientific works fall within the scope of the competition and are entirely new (they do not duplicate publications from previous procedures for the titles of "Doctor" and "Associate Professor"). The research covers topics in health psychology and is based on the biopsychosocial model of development, prevention, and coping.

The candidate employs mixed methods, skillfully combining quantitative and qualitative approaches based on representative national and international studies. She uses established international psychometric scales alongside original methodologies for measuring stress, family dynamics, motivation, and communication. The approach combines the identification of objective patterns across the entire population with a detailed examination of the subjective experiences of adolescents and young adults in "emerging adulthood."

The main thematic areas cover four core domains: The analysis focuses on mental health, risky and healthy behaviors, social communication, and academic performance during adolescence. The research examines both vulnerability and negative manifestations, as well as digital adaptation, self-efficacy, and positive development. It explores the role of neuroticism (as a risk factor), benevolence (as a protective factor in crises), and personality strengths (the positive development model).

Karamanova's research on chronic health problems in adults covers post-COVID syndrome and diabetes: The impact of these conditions on quality of life is being studied. Through in-depth interviews with 151 individuals who had suffered severe illness from five countries (Bulgaria, Slovakia, Croatia, Romania, and Poland), she analyzes the negative consequences, post-traumatic growth, and coping resources.

The scientific and applied aspect of her work is evident in the results, which are directly applicable to screening and preventive programs at the individual, family, and institutional levels. Karamanova justifies the need for online psychological support, telepsychiatry, and mobile applications for monitoring well-being during crises and social changes.

Associate Professor Anna Alexandrova-Karamanova, Ph.D., has established herself as an internationally recognized scholar with a clearly defined research niche in health psychology, and her scientometric indicators exceed the requirements for a professorship by a factor of two. She leads large-scale projects funded by the Scientific Research Fund, serves as the Bulgarian co-leader of the WHO's global HBSC study, is a national delegate to the European Health Psychology Society, and serves as principal investigator in ANSO consortia. She serves on international review panels in psychology (the Portuguese Science Foundation—FCT, and the International Science Council) and is a reviewer/editor for prestigious Q1 and Q2-ranked journals (Scopus and Web of Science).

Assoc. Prof. Aleksandrova-Karamonova's habilitation thesis (monograph, 2026) presents a comprehensive study on the intersection of the adolescent developmental crisis and the pandemic-

induced environmental crisis. The study is based on the biopsychosocial model in health and developmental psychology, balancing mental health risks with adaptive resources (personal maturation, post-traumatic growth).

The scientific contribution of the monograph lies in outlining four axes of analysis: Mental Health (stress, anxiety, loneliness), Risky Behavior (alcohol, vaping, cannabis), Social Interactions (family, digital communication), and Online Learning. The author demonstrates the role of Neuroticism as a key risk factor for the impact of the pandemic, and that Agreeableness and Openness to New Experiences serve as stable protective mechanisms for well-being. The work concludes with specific recommendations for school psychologists, educators, health professionals, and parents that are universally applicable for coping with stress and fostering motivation.

The candidate has earned a total of 1,168.75 points, with a required threshold of 590 points (and 550 under the ZRASRB):

Her scientometric profile and visibility are determined by the total number of citations: 274 citations in Scopus and 635 in Google Scholar. She achieved an h-index of 6 in Scopus and Web of Science (and an h-index of 8 in Google Scholar), which is an exceptionally high achievement in the social sciences and demonstrates lasting authority within the global academic community.

Associate Professor Anna Aleksandrova-Karamonova has served as project leader and principal investigator on numerous national and international projects funded by the Scientific Research Fund, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS), the Alliance of International Science Organizations (ANSO), the WHO, the EU, and UNICEF. She is the co-leader for Bulgaria in the WHO's global HBSC study, a national delegate to the European Health Psychology Society, a member of the International Evaluation Panel on Psychology at the Portuguese Science Foundation (FCT), and a reviewer for the International Science Council. Her active role as a member of editorial boards and a reviewer for leading global journals with Q1 and Q2 rankings (such as *Frontiers in Psychology*, *Internet Interventions*, *Societies*, and others) establishes Karamanova as a recognized and authoritative scholar.

Conclusion:

Associate Professor Anna Alexandrova Alexandrova-Karamonova, Ph.D., is a distinguished scholar in the field of health and developmental psychology with international recognition. Her body of work far exceeds the minimum national and institutional requirements of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS) and the Institute of Human Sciences–BAS for holding the academic position of "professor." I confidently give my positive assessment and, with full conviction, recommend to the esteemed Scientific Jury and the Scientific Council of the Institute for Population and Human Studies at BAS that they appoint Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anna Alexandrova Alexandrova-Karamonova to the academic position of "PROFESSOR" in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences, professional area 3.2. Psychology (Health and Developmental Psychology).

October 30, 2026 Author of the opinion:

Prof. Antoaneta Hristova, Ph.D.