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OPINION

On the publications of

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anna Aleksandrova Aleksandrova-Karamanova,

Candidate for the academic position of **Professor** in Professional Field 3.2 "Psychology", scientific specialty "Health and Developmental Psychology", announced in State Gazette No. 65 of 17.07.2026, for the needs of the Institute for Population and Human Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

1. Candidate Information

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anna Aleksandrova-Karamanova has demonstrated consistency and continuous advancement in both her education and professional career. She graduated in Psychology from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and has completed numerous specialisations through various formal and non-formal training programmes. She joined the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, specifically the Institute for Population and Human Studies, where she obtained her doctoral degree and was subsequently elected Associate Professor in Psychology, specialising in Health Psychology and Developmental Psychology.

2. Information Regarding the Competition

The documents have been duly submitted and properly organised. No violations of the applicable regulatory framework have been identified. The candidate's scientometric indicators substantially exceed the required minimum, reaching 1,168.75 points. There is only one candidate for the position of Professor.

3. Analysis of the Candidate's Scholarly Works

For the competition for the position of Professor, the candidate has submitted one co-authored monograph, one book chapter, 12 studies published in scholarly

journals and publications indexed and abstracted in internationally recognised databases, five studies published in non-indexed peer-reviewed journals or edited scholarly volumes, as well as two articles and conference papers published in non-indexed peer-reviewed journals or edited scholarly volumes.

Her publications have received 52 citations, of which 28 are in scholarly publications indexed and abstracted in internationally recognised databases, 12 are in peer-reviewed monographs and edited volumes, and 12 are in non-indexed peer-reviewed journals.

She has supervised one doctoral candidate who has successfully defended their dissertation and has led one national and one international project.

The submitted scholarly publications fall within the scope of the announced competition and demonstrate significant research contributions to the fields of Health Psychology and Developmental Psychology.

4. Research and Expert Activities of the Candidate

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anna Aleksandrova-Karamanova is a recognised scholar, researcher and expert. Her academic CV demonstrates that she has participated in, led and coordinated more than 20 national and international projects. She has also served on 10 prestigious editorial boards and is a member of numerous professional and scholarly organisations.

Her extensive expert work, together with the numerous citations, publications and other scholarly achievements, provides sufficient grounds for her appointment to the position of Professor.

5. Scientific Contributions

I fully endorse the candidate’s stated contributions and consider it appropriate to discuss them as follows:

1. The scientific understanding of the psychological and psychosocial functioning of adolescents has been enriched through an integrated analysis of both

negative and positive aspects of development. This approach enables the simultaneous examination of psychological vulnerability, adaptive resources, health behaviours and social functioning.

2. A complex model of interacting risk and protective factors affecting adolescents' mental health and well-being has been identified. Within this model, individual characteristics are examined in interaction with the family, school and peer environments. This approach moves beyond single-factor explanations of health-related and behavioural risks.

3. Profiles of heightened vulnerability and adaptability among adolescents have been differentiated according to sex, age and personality characteristics. Specific areas have been identified in which particular groups exhibit greater risk or possess more resources for coping with adverse life circumstances.

4. The role of positive youth development as a potential resource for preventing health risks has been revealed by establishing specific associations between the components of the 5Cs model and mental health, risk behaviours and health-promoting behaviours. This makes it possible to conceptualise positive functioning not merely as an outcome of favourable development, but also as a resource in the processes of adaptation.

5. The relationship between social connectedness and the health functioning of young people has been conceptualised, identifying various mechanisms through which family, peers, teachers and social support can act as risk or protective factors in relation to mental health, risk behaviours and adaptation.

6. The understanding of health behaviour as a multidetermined phenomenon has been broadened by simultaneously considering motivational, personal, social and health-related factors. Particular attention has been given to the pursuit of physical and mental health, self-esteem, body image and social influences as motivating factors for health-promoting behaviour.

7. The importance of body image for the overall health and psychological functioning of adolescents has been substantiated. A positive attitude towards one's own body is associated with better self-rated health, fewer psychosomatic complaints and higher psychological well-being.

8. The international comparative perspective on adolescent health literacy has been expanded by examining differences between European countries and changes over time, as well as by identifying the sociodemographic and social characteristics of more vulnerable groups. In this way, health literacy has been placed within the context of social inequalities and access to health-related resources.

9. The dual nature of psychological adaptation following serious health-related and crisis experiences has been highlighted through the simultaneous identification of negative consequences for physical and psychological functioning and potential positive changes, including personal development, changes in values and post-traumatic growth.

10. An integrative biopsychosocial framework has been developed for understanding and predicting health functioning in chronic conditions. This framework integrates the biomedical characteristics of a disease with psychological factors, coping styles, self-efficacy, social support and environmental characteristics. It links these factors to disease self-management and subsequent microvascular health.

In summary, I would emphasise that it is rare to encounter publications containing such in-depth, scientifically grounded and empirically substantiated findings and conclusions, based on research independently organised and conducted by the researcher herself.

6. Comments and Recommendations

I have no critical remarks concerning Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anna Aleksandrova-Karamanova. I would, however, offer the following recommendations: first, that she continue to pursue her scholarly interests with the same high level of success; second, that she continue supervising doctoral candidates; and third, that she herself proceed towards obtaining the higher doctoral degree, Doctor of Sciences.

7. Conclusion

On the basis of the analysis presented above, I recommend that the distinguished members of the Scientific Jury support the appointment of Anna Aleksandrova Aleksandrova-Karamanova to the academic position of Professor in Professional Field 3.2 “Psychology”, specialising in Health and Developmental Psychology. I hereby declare my **POSITIVE VOTE** in favour of the candidate.

22 October 2026 Prepared by:.....

City of Veliko Tarnovo **Prof. Krasimira Petrova, DSc**