**OPINION**

by Professor **Valentina Stoycheva Margaritova**, DSc, PhD

Member of the Scientific Panel

**With reference to**: competition for occupation of the academic position of Associate Professor, announced in SG iss.35 of 18.04.2023 in the professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Training in ... (Physical Education and Sports and Non-traditional Sports in the Education System) for the requirements of the Sports Department of Sofia University *St. Kliment Ohridski*.

**Candidate**: Chief Assistant Professor **Marina Nikolaeva Nedkova**, PhD, lecturer at the Sports Games and Mountain Sports Sector of the Sports Department of Sofia University *St. Kliment Ohridski*.

**Academic and Teaching Activities**:

The candidate received a BA in Ski Instructor and Trainer at the National Sports Academy *Vassil Levski* in 2006. In 2009 she obtained a Master's degree, majoring in Sports Management at the National Sports Academy *Vassil Levski*. She also holds a qualification in Sports Journalism from NSA (2006) and a Sports Facilities Management qualification from *High Sierra Pools* - Virginia/Maryland (USA, 2009).

During the period 2008 - 2014 she worked as a part-time teacher at *Todor Kableshkov* High School of Transport - Sofia, at NSA *Vassil Levski*, at Sofia University *St. Kliment Ohridski*, and at the University of Chemical Technology and Metallurgy - Sofia.

The applicant defended a dissertation thesis on the subject: "*New approaches to the Improvement of Physical Education and Sports in Higher Schools in the Republic of Bulgaria*" in 2014 and was awarded the academic and scientific degree Doctor in the scientific specialty: Theory and Methodology of Physical Education and Sports (incl. Methodology of Physical Therapy). In the same year, she started working at SU *St. Kliment Ohridski* as an Assistant. In 2017 she became Chief Assistant. She lectures and tutors students at SU, majoring at the Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts /Physical Education and Sports on Methodology of Physical Education and Sports of Primary Students; and majors at FESA/ Masters in Physical Education Didactics. The seminars at SU are held in Zumba-fitness, Fitness, Hiking, Skiing, Cricket and Rugby for all majors.

Nedkova has developed Zumba fitness, Cricket and Rugby curricula for all majors and is a member of a working group developing an e-Sports curriculum.

She possesses organizational skills and competences which help her in the organizational activities for *Sofia University* *Athlete and Trainer of the Year* nominations, the summer and the winter forums of higher education sports pedagogues in Bulgaria, summer and winter student practice and the International Scientific Congress of the Sports Department.

The candidate developed and practically implemented a curriculum and a test in an electronic environment during the Covid-19 pandemic for all majors. She is a reviewer of articles from the International Scientific Congress of the SD and a member of the editorial board of the Yearbook of the Sports Department. In the period 2017 - 2019 she was a member of the Attestation Commission, and from 2021 until now she has acted as Chair.

Nedkova participated in 20 conferences and 9 projects (as Head of one, Coordinator of two and a memeber in the rest).

Her professional qualities are also evident in her public activities:

• Secretary of the organization committee of the Rugby Europe 7s Championship - Women, Division A

• Chairman of the technical committee of the 6th University Rugby Europe 7s Championship

• Executive Director of the Bulgarian Student Cricket Union.

• Chair of the Bulgarian Student Cricket Union.

**Scientific Work**:

Ch. Assistant Professor Marina Nedkova PhD participates in the competition with a total of 31 works.

The reviewed monograph *Non-traditional Sports in the Educational System and Part of Physical Education and Sports in Higher Schools in Bulgaria* (225 pages) is relevant in the fact that, by researching global experience and modern Bulgarian practice in higher institutions, the author aims to introduce non-traditional sports and disciplines in the physical education and sports activities among Bulgarian university students such as cricket, rugby and field hockey, which are included in the sports calendar of the Association for University Sports *Akademik* and will further enrich the knowledge of sports experts.

In her published book, *Innovations in the Educational Process of Physical Education and Sports in the Higher Schools of the Republic of Bulgaria,* based on a defended dissertation thesis for awarding the educational and scientific degree Doctor, she studies the research technology of innovative approaches in the educational process of physical education and sports and the results of the implementation of innovations in the educational process, as well as some novel phenomena in the sports and competitive activities of students.

An article published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in global databases of scientific information is also offered.

The remaining 28 research papers are articles and reports published in non-referenced peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes.

In the scientific papers, the author's share is summarized as follows: 10 are independent and 21 are co-authored. Of those, 26 are in Bulgarian and 5 in English language.

The offered scientific output has a theoretical and practical effect, distributed in several thematic areas:

- current state, development and problems of the physical education and sports in higher schools;

- innovations in the educational process of physical education and sports in secondary and higher education;

- physical condition, development and capacity of the students;

- new and non-traditional sports and disciplines practiced in higher education institutions.

The research work contains the necessary scientific contributions. The studies were conducted using reliable and informative methods.

**Sports and Competition Activity and Experience in Training:**

Ch. assistant professor Marina Nedkova PhD is a competitor in:

• Alpine skiing disciplines (SC *Mladost*, 1990 - 2000)

• Rugby (RC NSA, 2000 - 2002) - senior girls champion of the Republic of Bulgaria, Sofia

• Cricket (CC NSA, 2011 – 2014)

• Cricket (National team, 2013 – 2014) – Balkan champion – women, Sofia.

Her trainer’s experience is based on:

• Cricket at SU *St. Kliment Ohridski*

• Alpine skiing disciplines - men and women, snowshoeing in Special Olympics

• Alpine skiing disciplines - men and women at SU *St. Kliment Ohridski*

• Cricket at the *Bulgarian Student Cricket Union* - state champion and winner of the ECS, 2019 and 2020.

**Conclusion:**

The candidate in the competition, Chief Assistant Professor Marina Nedkova PhD meets the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Ordinance for its implementation. She possesses the professional qualities of a researcher and a scientist in her field, with established scientific and practical contributions required for the academic position of Associate Professor. The minimum national requirements under Art. 2b of ASDA for higher education area 1. Pedagogy, professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Training in ... (Physical Education and Sports and Non-traditional Sports in the Education System) are met.

I propose to the Honorable Panel to award Chief Assistant Professor Marina Nedkova PhD the academic title of Docent in professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Training in ... (Physical Education and Sports and Non-traditional Sports in the Education System) under the requirements of the Sports Department of Sofia University *St. Kliment Ohridski*.

July 23, 2023 Reviewer:

Plovdiv (Prof.Valentina Margaritova, DSc, PhD)