

OPINION

From: Prof. Dr. Sc. Jivko Ivanov Draganov, Department of International Law and EU Law, Law Faculty of the University of National and World Economy

Subject: the materials submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position "associate professor" in the field of higher education - 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field - 3.7. Administration and management, scientific specialty - "Management of intellectual property", announced in State Gazette, no. 55/27.06.2023 and on the Technical University -Gabrovo website for the needs of the "Social and Economic Sciences" department at the Faculty of "Economics", with candidate Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Ventsislava Aleksandrova Nikolova-Minkova.

1. Overview of the content and of the results in the research works

The only candidate in the competition is Chief Assistant Professor Ventsislava Aleksandrova Nikolova-Minkova. For her participation Chief Assistant Professor Minkova has presented a list of publications, which includes a habilitation thesis, 3 articles in journals that are referenced and indexed in global databases with scientific information, 10 articles in non-refereed journals with scientific review, 17 scientific reports, two textbooks and one study material.

The main focus of the candidate's research is in the field of industrial property management and, more specifically, trademark and patent management. The publishing activity of Chief Assistant Professor Minkova is impressive and includes a total of thirty research works, more than 10 of which are published in English.

The monograph "The trademark in the brand" is 216 pages long and includes an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, appendices and references. The bibliography contains 69 publications in Bulgarian and a total of 283 publications in Russian and English. The object of research is the trademark and its transformation into a brand, and the object of research is the value of the brand as a factor for its competitiveness. The work covers the issues concerning the origin and development of the signification of goods, the legal protection of trademarks, their functions and their use, the brand, its value to consumers and its cost, as well as the competitive advantages of the brand. A comparative study of the cost of top brands in countries with leading economies is made. The author argues that the transformation of the trademark into a brand is possible when the trademark acquires wide recognition among consumers who build loyalty to it, and that the high generated value of brands is a sustainable competitive advantage. As the main contribution of the habilitation work, the disclosure of the role, mechanisms and importance of building emotional attachment of consumers to the brand for the increase of the value of the brand and the competitiveness of enterprises can be indicated.

2. Review of the candidate's teaching and research

2.1. Teaching

The candidate in the competition possesses the necessary teaching experience. From the presented curriculum vitae, it is established that Dr. Ventsislava Nikolova-Minkova has more than 10 years of teaching. In the last seven years, she has held the academic position of "Chief Assistant Professor" at TU - Gabrovo. Her teaching includes classes in the following disciplines: Intellectual property; Industrial property and patent policy; Protection of intellectual property; Management of innovation and industrial property; Quality management; Digital advertising; Economics; Economics and Management; Enterprise economy. Ch. Assistant Professor Ventsislava Nikolova-Minkova has teaching experience in the field of the announced competition, which meets the requirements for the academic position of "associate professor".

2.2. Research

Chief Assistant Professor Ventsislava Nikolova-Minkova is the author of 35 scientific reports from national and international conferences, 23 articles, 4 studies, of which 3 are in refereed and indexed SCOPUS journals, 2 textbooks and one book of study materials and one monograph. She has participated in national and international projects, including 6 university projects financed by the scientific research fund.

3. Contributions (scientific, scientific-applied, applied). Significance of contributions to science and practice

The contributions of the candidate's publications are mainly in two areas: the development of the research of intellectual property management and the development of research on intellectual property as an indicator of the business environment. The articles "Managing Intellectual Property to Achieve Economic Growth", Quest Journals, Journal of Research in Business and Management, Vol. 11, Iss.6, and "Intellectual Property Management for SMEs", International Journal of Financial Studies, Economics and Management, Vol.2, No 3 and the scientific report "Economic Perspectives on Intellectual Property Management", Fourth International Scientific Conference Challenges of Tourism And Business Logistics in the 21st Century, Publ: Faculty of Tourism and Business Logistics, Goce Delchev University of Shtip, North Macedonia, enrich existing management research by presenting intellectual property management strategies. The article "Trademarks in the retail sector in 2020", "Management and Education" journal, volume 16 (2), Burgas and the report "Components of Customer Based Brand Equity", Third International Scientific Conference 'ISCTBL 2020' Challenges of Tourism and Business Logistics in the 21st Century, University of Shtip, analyze the role of companies' marketing tools in the process of transforming a registered trademark into a brand. A contribution to the development of research in the field of intellectual property as a business indicator is the summary and presentation of data on the dynamics of the value of brands in economic crises and the role of their value as a competitive advantage, made by the candidate in the publications: "Trade Marks in Europe and their Competitiveness", Thrace Journal of Sciences, Vol. 18, Suppl.

1.; “Comparative analysis of sectors with strong brands in some European countries (2013-2020).Impact of COVID-19”, Eastern Academic Journal, Issue 1; and “Global Brands Under The Influence Of COVID-19”, Trakia Journal of Sciences, Vol. 19, Suppl. 1.

4. Critical remarks and recommendations

Some remarks and recommendations may be addressed to the candidate. They are mainly related to her research of the legal aspects of the problems. First of all, it is striking that fundamental works from the available legal literature in Bulgarian are not discussed in the analysis of legal phenomena and institutes. In this regard, a recommendation can be made to the author, when researching other fields of scientific knowledge, to conduct a more in-depth study of the relevant scientific literature. This would contribute to avoiding inaccuracies, such as are observed in relation to the analysis of the legal protection of the studied objects. Such are, for example, the statement that the Criminal Code regulates not only the criminal, but also the administrative and civil protection of brands (p. 23); the incorrect interpretation of the absolute and relative grounds for refusal of trademark registration (p. 26); the incorrect classification of franchising as a subtype of license agreement; the incorrect statement that olfactory marks can be registered in the EU (p. 36, footnote), etc.

A significant shortcoming of the habilitation work is that the author refers to and analyzes repealed legal acts – the 1999 Trademarks and Geographical Indications Act and Regulation 207/2009. The 1999 Act has been repealed by the 2019 Trademarks and Geographical Indications Act, which is a completely new law and contains many significant differences. It is here that the main omission of the author, who did not take into account some significant changes, such as the removal of the requirement for a graphic representation of the sign for which registration as a trademark is sought, and the introduction of a new requirement in its place, that the sign should be able to be represented in the State Register of Trademarks in a manner which allows clearly and precisely to be determined the subject matter of the protection granted by the registration.

The critical remarks and recommendations made do not change my positive assessment of the candidate's research.

5. Conclusion

Based on my overall assessment I recommend Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Ventsislava Aleksandrova Nikolova-Minkova to be elected as “associate professor” at Technical University – Gabrovo in field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field - 3.7. Administration and management, scientific specialty - "Management of intellectual property".

27.10.2023

Jury Member: /signature/
/Prof. Dr.Sc. Jivko Draganov/