

POSITION

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member of the Scientific jury of the competition for occupation of the academic position “**Associate Professor**” (Dozent) in professional field 3.3. Political Science (Regional Governance and Politics) declared in the State Gazette, vol. 93 dated 26.11.2019 for the scientific and teaching activity of assistant professor **Elena Angelova Kalfova-Voynova, PhD.**

1. Applicant's scientific and teaching profile:

The only candidate in the competition is Assistant Professor Elena Kalfova, PhD in Political Science (2008) with qualifications in the field of competition, i.e. in Local and Regional Governance, Politics and Political Process. She is a lecturer and researcher with international qualifications partially acquired through her specialization in Maastricht, the Netherlands. So far, he has accumulated 10 years of academic research and teaching experience at the Faculty of Philosophy at the Sofia University (tenure at the Department of Public Administration), where she has grown consistently in her academic career from assistant to chief assistant. Her teaching is in 3 majors - Public Administration, Political Science, European Studies – which falls entirely in the field of competition: Regional Policy, Local Government, Multi-level EU Governance, Impact Assessment, Local Government Projects, Cross-border Cooperation and Regional Development Programs and Projects, etc., in the bachelor's and master's programs. She has directed and managed several Master's programs in Public Administration. Prof. Kalfova is known as a rigorous and demanding teacher. In parallel with her teaching activities, Dr. Kalfova has emerged as a consultant, researcher and participant in a large number of working groups and research again in the field of competition, a total of 31 projects, and she is leading some of them.

My conclusion is that the research profile of Assistant Professor Elena Kalfova fully corresponds to the announced competition and presents her as a qualified candidate for the academic post of Associate Professor in the subject area of the competition.

2. General features of R&D activities of the candidate:

The applicant's research activities are entirely within the scope of the competition and the teaching needs of Public Administration. This activity is characterized by consistency and dedication. So far, her professional efforts have been productive and valuable. For the competition

Associate Professor Elena Kalfova presents papers satisfactory in quantity and quality produced after the previous competition for Assistant Professor. In the competition for associate professor, she appears with 1 habilitation monographic work of considerable volume and quality, 14 articles and studies (after 2014 considering that she is PhD in political science since 2008, when other works have been presented), 9 papers on other occasions and still other papers in scientific conferences. It is clear from the citation report that these publications have been cited no less than 34 times, which is a significant number for a lecturer with no tenure yet. Dr. Kalfova is the recipient of the Sofia University Award for Contributions to Research. The total volume of Kalfova's scientific work is considerable, and this should be taken into account in a habilitation competition. My conclusion is that Elena Kalfova enters the competition for associate professor with significant quantity and quality of scientific production. All publications are identical in content to the competition field. They meet the requirements that they have not served in previous competitions of Dr. Kalfova.

3. Main scientific and applied science contributions:

I find the general practical direction of Dr. Kalfova's research, in which she makes numerous suggestions for improving the governance system and regional policy in Bulgaria particularly valuable. This particular line is strongly represented in her major work presented for habilitation. The whole set of theoretical contributions is a system that supports a good governance model adapted to the conditions in Bulgaria. The existence of such a model is, by definition, a major merit in academic career development procedures, as it demonstrates the systematic integrity of individual contributions. This is also the case with the work of Dr. Kalfova, and in particular her monograph, which presents in full the theoretical and applied model for the study of regional policy and regional governance. The process of development of regional government and regional institutions in Bulgaria is presented and analyzed and the results of the applied regional policy in Bulgaria are evaluated. From a methodological point of view, the fact is that Kalfova derives her model entirely from the institutional approach. This may seem both understandable and one-sided, at least at first glance, but it does prove to be a worthwhile strategy after all. I agree with the observation made in the Self-Assessment of Contributing Moments that thus regional policy and regional governance fall into the category of interconnected processes - which is the basis of the transition from theory to practical recommendations: "change in the governance system leads to a change of the regional policy content" and vice versa. Thus, the author's thesis is that regional policy is the result of the interaction between economic and social processes on the one hand and the specifics of the institutional system on the other. A scientific system for assessing regional policies is also a scientific contribution of relevance to the practical implications of the study. It is my conclusion that Dr. Kalfova's scientific contributions, following the previous procedures for her advancement in scientific and teaching careers, are present, they are tangible in the form of new models and principles developed, methodologically well supported by theoretical evidence and demonstrate a broad and stable professional a culture necessary for good academic teaching at a higher level.

4. Characteristics of the teaching and project activity of the candidate:

As the field of public administration implies the combination of several types of knowledge, among which a segment of managerial, economic, legal, political and sociological issues it is imperative to include a lecturer, researcher and member of the multilateral training team in teaching, research and regular academic work in the solution of study questions of the Department of Public Administration. Dr. Kalfova matches that requirement in this way not only in her publications, but above all in her teaching activities.

So far, Dr. Elena Kalfova has been intensively teaching undergraduate as well as master's degree programs. Both her previous teaching activity and the associate professor projected for the position exceed the much needed hours. From the Training Workload of Assistant Prof. Elena Kalfova, it is clear that she has a teaching load in the bachelor's and master's degrees of three specialties from the Faculty of Science at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"- Public Administration, European Studies and Political Science, which far exceeds the requirements of the Law for the development of academic staff: Kalfova is a principal lecturer in 10 courses and conducts seminars of 2 courses. In addition, she is the head of a master's program, a scientific leader of a postgraduate program. Dr. Kalfova is qualified and applies forms of e-learning in her work. He is also the head of 32 graduates who successfully defended their masters theses, which is a significant amount, especially for an assistant professor. Dr. Kalfova actively participates in the organization of scientific forums, as well as in the editorial program of the specialty Public Administration. She is a member of reputable professional organizations. She works intensively on the development and transformation of curricula at the Faculty of Philosophy. The list of candidate's research and educational projects (guidance, participation) is important. She is a recognizable and desirable partner in the project activity. This is a quality expertise for the benefit of students and the college community.

My conclusion is that Assistant Professor Elena Kalfova's teaching fully complies with the requirements of the competition and covers the academic standards for this type of competitions. Apart from all formal correspondences, her teaching work deserves a high overall positive assessment, confirmed by the systematic expression of opinion both of his colleagues with whom he has worked together and of the students he has taught for years. Her presence in the scientific team is characterized by high academic morale.

5. Critical remarks and recommendations:

I have repeatedly had the opportunity to point out that Assistant Professor Elena Kalfova has high personal standards for research, teaching and design. I have no significant critique on the publications submitted and the applicant's past activities. However, I have a note regarding the neglect of the sociological parameters of regional policy and, above all, the cultural factors that influence its formation, implementation and impact. I emphasize that this topic is not completely absent. However, over-reliance on the institutional approach in practice limits the ability to cover cultural aspects. I recommend that in the future Dr. Kalfova focuses on the cultural aspects of regional policies and regional governance, so that she could then make a theoretical analysis in this direction.

My conclusion is that there is an explicit need for an innovative methodological approach beyond institutionalism, fully deployed and used as a basis for analysis of this kind.

6. Opinion about the applicant

I have known Elena Kalfova for 10 years and my impressions of her research and teaching work in Public Administration, the international forums we participated in together, her applied work as a consultant on practical issues of our joint practice confirm my opinion that she is fully deserved can be habilitated, which will benefit the activity of the specialties in which he teaches.

CONCLUSION:

On the basis of the findings and evaluations on each point stated, I claim that Assistant Professor Elena Kalfova, PhD meets all the requirements for occupying the academic position Associate Professor in the professional field 3.3. Political Science (Regional Governance and Politics) declared in the State Gazette, vol. 93 of 26.11.2019 and I recommend to the Honorable Scientific Jury to support her application for the academic post of Associate Professor.