

REVIEW

By: Prof. PhD Aleksandar Ivanov Marinov,
Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski”, Department of Public Administration,
member of scientific jury, appointed by the Rector of SU „St. Kliment Ohridski”,
Order № ПД 38/697 - 09.12.2019

Regarding: Competition for awarding the Academic Position “Associate Professor” in
Professional Field 3.3. Political Science (Regional Governance and Policy),
announced in Official Journal No. 93 / 26.11.2019

In the competition takes part a sole candidate - Assistant Professor Elena Kalfova,
PhD in Political Science.

1. Assessment of fulfilling requirements for admittance to evaluation

According Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA), to the evaluation stage of the procedure are admitted candidates, fulfilling the requirements, including fulfillment of the minimal national requirements. The verification of the file, namely the information regarding the mentioned fulfillment, accepted by the Faculty Commission, responsible for the check-up of the candidates in the competition, proves that Assistant Professor Elena Kalfova is in line with the requirements and should be admitted to the evaluation stage of the procedure.

2. General characteristic of the candidate’s work submitted for evaluation

The candidate Assistant Professor Elena Kalfova, PhD has submitted for participation in the procedure 15 papers, including 1 monographic study and 14 scientific articles (4 in English). All submitted publications are admitted to evaluation, since none of them duplicates papers submitted in procedures for her scientific degrees and positions.

3. Brief outline of the candidate’s scholar career

Elena Kalfova graduated with Master's degree at Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski” in 2000. Later she had specialization in Maastricht University, the Netherlands. In

2008 she was awarded the PhD degree for her work on the Local and Regional Governance and Politics. Her academic career developed entirely at the Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski” – as Assistant (2004-2009), and Assistant Professor (since 2009).

Assistant Professor Elena Kalfova was appointed as director of Master Program at the Department of Public Administration – “Impact Assessment and Policies Evaluation” (since 2016). The scholar profile of Assistant Professor Elena Kalfova fully corresponds to the announced competition and presents her as a qualified candidate in the field.

4. Overview of the teaching and pedagogical activity of the candidate

The teaching activity of Assistant Professor Elena Kalfova ranges over 16 years at Sofia University “St. Kl. Ohridski”. At the present she teaches several courses in the bachelor master programs of Sofia University “St. Kl. Ohridski” in 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.

Assistant Professor Elena Kalfova is also a successful mentor and supervisor. She has supervised many master theses.

5. Evaluation of the scholar and applied contributions of the candidate

In the competition for associate professor, Assistant Professor Elena Kalfova applies with 1 habilitation monographic work of considerable volume and quality, 14 articles and studies (after 2014). The publications proposed by the candidate fully meet the requirements of the competition. In this review I devote special attention to the monographic study **Regional Governance and Regional Policy – Application and Evaluation**, ISBN 978-954-07-4863-4, PH “St. Kliment Ohridski”, 2019. This monographic work has not been used for participation in other competitions.

Assistant Professor Elena Kalfova is author – except of above mentioned monographic study - of multiple studies, articles and other publications, amongst which 14 articles are presented in this competition. Among this broad field, the following publications seem to me of particular significance, both theoretically and in applied context:

- Kalofva, E., Factors for adoption of EU funds in Bulgaria, Heliyon, 2019, Volume 5, Issue 1, 31 January 2019, e01150, ISSN 2405-8440, SJR (0,43 - 2018Q1), <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2405844018366635>
- Калфова, Е., 2019, Устойчивост на регионалните различия в България., в Калфова, Е., С. Петров, съст., Демократичност, децентрализация, самоуправление. Юбилеен сборник в чест на 60 годишнината на доц. д.п.н. Милена Стефанова, УИ "Св. Климент Охридски", с. 189-219, ISBN:978-954-07-4665-4.
- Kalofva, E., 2019, Regional Policy and Regional Governance - The Bulgarian Institutional Reform That Did Not Take Place, Публични политики.bg, vol 10, issue 4, 2019, с. 33-57, ISSN 1314-2313
- Калфова, Е., 2019, Регионална политика и процесите на европеизация в държавите от Централна и Източна Европа, в Стефанова, М., съст., 30 години реформи на публичното управление в Централна и Източна Европа, УИ "Св. Климент Охридски", с. 190-215, ISBN:978-954-07-4843-6;
- Калфова, Е., 2018, Quality of Governance and EU Regional Policy. Evidence from Bulgaria, Public Administration for Well-being and Growth Presented Papers from the 26th NISPAcee Annual Conference, NISPAcee Press, ISBN 978-80-89013-97-5;
- Калфова, Е., 2018, Качеството на управление - основен фактор за реализирането на регионалната политика, в Калфова, Е., С. Петров, съст., Накъде сме тръгнали? Юбилеен сборник в чест на проф. д.п.н. Тодор Танев, УИ „Св. Кл. Охридски“, с. 79-101, ISBN 978-954-07-4533-6;
- Калфова, Е., 2018, Сдружаване на общините за предоставяне на услуги – иновативна практика или ограничаване на самоуправлението, в Томова, Т., С. Петров, съст., Международният трансфер на административни модели и инструменти: възможности, ограничения, рискове, УИ "Св. Кл. Охридски", с. 161-182, ISBN 978-954-07-4406-3;
- Калфова, Е., 2018, Оценка на въздействието на регулациите като инструмент за подобряване на качеството на публичните политики - приложение в България., в Маринов, Ал., съст., Оценка на въздействието и въздействие на оценката, УИ "Св. Кл. Охридски", с. 107-123, ISBN 978-954-07-4570-1.

It should be mentioned that Elena Kalfova's ideas have been cited by a lot of researchers in the field – the registered citations amount to 27, including 4 in works published in foreign language.

There are at least three interrelated conceptual areas proving the ability of the candidate to ask and answer complex theoretical questions, following a very sound logic of scholar evolution.

First. A theoretical approach based on integrating the conceptual frameworks of institutionalism, neo-institutionalism and public policies is applied. Using this approach, the development and change of regional policy and regional governance are considered as an interconnected process, which is a part of an overall trend toward change of the state role and functions and method of implementation of public policies.

Second. Applying the above mentioned structural framework, Assistant Professor Elena Kalfova offers an original interpretation of the changes in the method of public governance and implementation of public policies, patterns of interaction between public and private sectors, and imposition of multi-level governance system. The involvement of multiple institutions at different levels in the regional governance process is outlined as the reason to define it as a decision space rather than a specific type / types of institutional structure. Alternative options for development of institutions at regional level are perceived as a change in the functions that the institutions perform rather than as a change in the institutional form. Therefore, the recent development at regional level of governance represents both a change in its institutional organisation and a change in the functions it performs in the public governance system.

Third. Stepping out of the structural framework, Assistant Professor Elena Kalfova addresses an extremely important field of the process of evaluating regional policy and the specific challenges it poses. Regional policy is wider policy, which usually sets a combination of economic and social objectives, therefore, it is extremely important to apply conceptually sound, systematic approach in producing the evaluation. The aim is to provide reliable and objective evaluation that is accessible to all stakeholders. The evaluation of regional policy, however, has serious political implications. The evaluation results may or may not legitimise the implemented policies. This is crucial in the case of regional policy, given the complex multi-level governance system and the huge resources, which it allocates in the EU's particular case. Evaluation production should be an open process, which can also help to increase institutional capacity for policy development and quality policy-making.

6. Evaluation of the personal contribution and authorship

The scholar texts and corresponding contributions are with no doubt personal work of the candidate Elena Kalfova. I accept entirely the self-assessment of the contributions.

7. Personal impressions

I know Dr. Elena Kalfova for 15 years and have a respect for her high personal standards for research, teaching and scholar moral.

8. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no significant critique on the publications submitted and the applicant's past activities.

CONCLUSION

The scholar production and contributions of Assistant Professor Elena Kalfova are entirely in line with the requirements of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA) and other corresponding regulations. The qualification of the candidate is solid and well proven.

These results give me compelling reasons to propose to the honorable scientific jury to vote unanimously for the awarding of the academic position “Associate Professor” in the professional field 3.3. Political Science (Regional Governance and Policy) to Assistant Professor Elena Kalfova, PhD.

17.03. 2020

Prepared and signed by:

(prof. PhD Aleksandar Marinov)