

## **STANDPOINT**

**by Prof. D. Sc. Ivan Dimov Kabakov**

Chair „History and Theory of Culture“

Faculty of Philosophy at Sofia University “St Kliment Ohridski”

On the participation in the competition for occupying the academic position of “professor” in professional field 3.3 Political sciences (Public and social policies), announced in State Gazette No 54 from 29 June 2021 of the candidate

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sc. Tatyana Trifonova Tomova**

### **1. A general assessment of the qualities of the candidate**

Since 1999 to date Assoc. Prof. D. Sc. Tatyana Tomova is a lecturer in the Chair of Public administration, St Kliment Ohridski Sofia University. Between 2012 and 2020 she is also Chair holder. Prof. Tomova has a Ph.D. in political sciences (1996) with a postgraduate qualification in analysis of social policies, and research experience gained in the Political behaviour lab at Sofia University “St Kliment Ohridski”.

Assoc. Prof. D. Sc. Tatyana Tomova has significant experience not only as a researcher but also as the Executive Director of the Center for Strategic Studies of the XXI Century Foundation and an expert at NACID, whose main activities and responsibilities are related to the recognition of higher education received abroad.

The documents and references submitted for the purposes of the competition for “professor” position testify to an extremely impressive and purposeful professional and career development in the field of political science and in particular of public and social policies. This conclusion should be supplemented by the accumulated rich managerial and administrative experience of the candidate for professor as head of chair and deputy dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski ”.

### **2. Scientific publications**

The candidate presented 12 publications in the field of public and social policies, such as the monograph "The Policy Process: Governance Based on Constraints", Sofia, Sofia University Press, 2021, ISBN 978-954-07-5289-1, is defined as the main habilitation work, and the monograph "Development of policies, programs, projects", Sofia, Bulgarian School of Politics, 2008, ISBN 987-954-9338-05-8, is a supplementary publication in relation to the main publication. These works do not repeat or summarise existing knowledge and significantly exceed the minimum required 100 pages for a monograph. Moreover, their author has the ambition and courage to seek, find and offer workable solutions to the current state of public and social policies, not only in Bulgaria, but also very well knows and creatively uses with the necessary degree of criticism the available knowledge in the commented area.

The other publications show clearly and with the help of documents the path taken, the critical work with the concepts, as well as their detailed study with a view to their rethought use in the already mentioned monographs and above all in the main habilitation work — "The Policy Process: Governance Based on Constraints". Particularly significant and useful in this regard are the articles included in the list of publications for the competition, which problematise key concepts in the main habilitation work such as "Public Policies' Contemporary Context: Challenges to Instrumental Rationality", "The Levels of Governance and Management: Reflections on the Bulgarian Footprint in the Theory of Public Administration", "Value Dilemmas in the Field of Social Impact Assessment", as well as "Social Policy: The Pitfalls of Evaluation".

### **3. The main monograph**

Public policies have always been the focus of the research interests of Assoc. Prof. D. Sc. Tatyana Tomova, but in the main habilitation work presented for participation in the competition for "professor" the emphasis is placed on the process of their making in conditions of dispersion of power due to the empowerment of citizens with subjective rights as part of the democratisation of modern societies. In this situation, according to the candidate, it is necessary to rethink the traditional political models, as well as the role and importance of public administration in them, through the combined use of the possibilities of deliberative and participatory democracy. It is argued that it is impossible to propose more policies in the way we know, which requires rethinking the policy-making process by

identifying constraints and finding management solutions to overcome them in view of the full participation of various stakeholders in the commented processes. Defined as "measures to achieve the goals that the affected community of people undertakes, and the political power in it legitimises and makes mandatory", policies must necessarily answer the question "what do we do or should we do to achieve the common goals" (p.72 of the main work). Assoc. Prof. D. Sc. Tatyana Tomova, in search of an answer to this question, in the first chapter of her habilitation work analyses in detail and systematically the relations between politics and democracy, politics and management, management and public governance, in order to identify the way in which the policy process takes place.

The second chapter is devoted to theories that thematise the commented process, such as theories about the progressive process of policies and their transfer from the past and beyond, institutional rational choice, multiple flows, and the cohesion of an idea/vision in relation to the role and meaning that the so-called stakeholders and policy communities have. Tatyana Tomova's critical attitude to the commented theories and used concepts demonstrates not only the necessary distance from them in view of the quality of the analysis, but also reveals new alternatives to their creative use in developing a research framework of the policy process.

What has been done so far in this part of the habilitation work is in fact the necessary preconditions and conditions to proceed in the third chapter to proposing the concept of narrowing in the policy process. "Constraints in the policy process are those connections between the stages in the cycle in which the process is slowed down, interrupted or reversed" (p. 159). This concept is different from that used in business management and business circles. It is related to the identification of the various bottlenecks in the policy process (pp. 164-187) with a view to proposing workable solutions to overcome the difficulties that have caused the identified constraints. The third chapter ends with the definition of the subjects who have the legitimacy to participate in the management of the commented process in order to ensure its (at least) minimal manageability (p. 187-189).

The conclusion identifies a significant social change — "from an instrument of governance they (politics — note by IK) become a political practice that reflects the changed nature of democracy" (p. 191). This finding underlies the search, finding and offering of solutions, albeit of a temporary nature. Policies turn out to be a kind of "lifeline", which is "a matter of self-organisation of communities, of bottom-up initiative, of entrepreneurship, of finding an appropriate tool for achieving collective goals." They do

not presuppose power, but rather coordination between many participants in the process of formulating collective goals ” (p. 194).

#### **4. Publications on the topic of the competition**

The monograph "Policy making, programs, projects" is complementary to the main habilitation work through careful and in-depth study and presentation of categories and concepts, which subsequently acquire key importance for the presentation of the concept of management based on constraints. In this context, other publications, such as the articles “Public Policies’ Contemporary Context: Challenges to Instrumental Rationality”, “The Levels of Governance and Management: Reflections on the Bulgarian Footprint in the Theory of Public Administration”, “Value Dilemmas in the Field of Social Impact Assessment”, as well as “Social Policy: The Pitfalls of Evaluation” testify to the systematic and purposeful accumulated research experience in working with concepts that retain part of their original meaning, but also change in order to seek compliance and adequacy in terms of the dynamics in the environment for making public policies in modern societies. As a result of the research path presented through the commented articles, the key concepts in the main work acquire a full and diverse content and meaning, immersed and extracted from the synchronous and diachronic analysis of time and space.

The research and teaching activity of associate professor D. Sc. Tatyana Tomova is involved in the research and teaching of public and social policies. In this case, it is a question of adapting the theory of "constrictions in the process" to the policies, substantiating the thesis that the participants in this process, the so-called stakeholders and policy communities could only manage it if they knew its generic and specific constraints. This position is convincingly and arguably defended by the candidate, which together with the correctly identified scientific contributions of the achieved research results give me sufficient grounds to vote "YES" for the award of the academic position "Professor" in the professional field 3.3 Political Science (Public and Social Policies) of Associate Professor D. Sc. Tatyana Trifonova Tomova.

10.10.2021

Sofia

Prof. D.Sc. Ivan Kabakov