

# **S T A T E M E N T**

**from Assoc. Prof. Dr. Milena Hristova Yorgova**

regarding the materials submitted by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ginka Andonova Mehandzhiyska for the participation in a competition for holding the academic position of “professor” in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.4. Social work (Methods of social work, Gerontological social work), announced in SG, issue 105 / 11.12.2020

## **I. Data for the competition**

The competition for the academic position of “professor” was announced by Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” for the needs of the Faculty of Education (SG, issue 105 / 11.12.2020).

Documents for participation in the competition were submitted by one candidate - Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ginka Andonova Mehandzhiyska, a lecturer at the Department of Social Work at the Faculty of Education at Sofia University. She was admitted to participate by a decision of the Commission for examination of the candidates’ documents (Order № RD-38-12 / 13.01.2021) dated 15.02.2021 (Protocol).

The statement was prepared on the basis of a decision of the first session of the scientific jury (Protocol №1 / 18.02.2021), order (RD-38-8 / 07.01.2021 of the Rector of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

The course of the competition procedure is in compliance with the provisions of the Law on the Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the application of the Law on the Academic Staff Development and the Regulations for the conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” and does not provoke any doubts about violations.

## **II. Candidate's details**

The academic development of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mehandzhiyska began in 1997 when she became a part-time assistant at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". She successively held the academic positions of assistant professor (1998), senior assistant professor (2001), chief assistant professor (2004) and associate professor (2009). Her teaching and research activities are closely related to the theoretical-methodological and applied aspects of social work. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mehandzhiyska is well known in the scientific and professional community as the author of numerous publications, including monographs and educational-methodical literature, as well as an expert, consultant and lecturer on the problems of social work in social services at municipal and national level. Since 2014 she has been a member of expert groups at NEAA for accreditation on professional field 3.4. Social activities and member of scientific juries under the LDASRB.

## **III. Description of the candidate's scientific publications**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mehandzhiyska has presented herself for the competition as the author of a total of 41 publications, which are not repeated with the publications for the acquisition of ESD "Doctor" and the publications for holding the academic position "Associate Professor". The works are structured as follows: *by type*: monographs - 2; teaching and methodical aids - 3; chapters from books - 3; studies - 4; articles and reports - 29; *by authorship*: 39 independent publications with a total volume of 1142 publishing pages (95% of the total scientific production) and 2 co-authored.

The monograph "Social Work with Individual Clients" has been presented as the major habilitation thesis. It examines the conceptual foundations of social work with individual clients, analyzes the application of methods: social work on a case-by-case basis and individual counseling in the context of individualization of the assisting process and seeks projections of the individualization in practice such as regulation and professional behaviour.

The monograph “On the Nature and Classifications of Social Work Methods” is devoted to an extremely controversial research problem related to the definition and classification development of social work methods.

The scientific production submitted for review is related to the thematic focus of the announced competition. The candidate's publications are characterized by in-depth and innovation, reviewed and published in authoritative publications. In terms of quantity and volume, they meet the requirements and show active and productive research activity related to the topic of the announced competition.

There is no proven plagiarism by the legal order in scientific publications.

#### **IV. General characteristics of the candidate’s scientific and teaching activity**

From the information presented for the competition it is evident that the candidate has provided sufficient evidence about her research and teaching activity.

##### *Participation in projects and scientific forums*

Since 2010 Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mehandzhiyska has participated in 11 projects (2010-2021). She has been a team member or has participated in activities in 5 national projects, 2 international projects; she has been the project manager of 4 university research projects. In her research activity Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mehandzhiyska has included students and doctoral students who, under her guidance, have successfully participated in scientific forums. The candidate has 19 participations in authoritative scientific forums.

The scientific research of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mehandzhiyska has found real application in the practice through her participation as a consultant and lecturer on current issues in the work of the social services - development of individual assessments and plans, methods of working with advanced in age and elderly people, occupational therapy, etc. Assessment of the candidate's expertise is her participation in working groups at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Health.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mehandzhiyska is a member of the editorial boards of the journal “Social Work” and the Yearbook of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Book Social Activities.

### Teaching activity

The teaching activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mehandzhiyska fully corresponds to the scientific field and the professional field of the competition, as well as to her professional development. Since 2010 she has conducted lectures and has developed lecture courses in the disciplines: “Methods of Social work”, “Gerontological Social Work”, “Methods of Gerontological Social Work”, “Workshop on Methods of Social Work” and other disciplines in bachelor's degree programmes; “Methods of Social work”, “Interviewing Refugees”, “Supervision in Social Work” and other disciplines in master's degree programmes; “Autobiographical Interview, Autobiographical Narrative and Narrative Analysis in Research in the Field of Social Work” in the doctoral degree programme. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mehandzhiyska has supervised two doctoral students who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis.

The thematic aspects of the research and applied activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mehandzhiyska are successfully combined with the disciplines she teaches and allow the use of the obtained scientific results in the educational process and the training with a pronounced practical orientation.

### **V. Scientific contributions**

From the publications submitted by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mehandzhiyska for the participation in the competition results of scientific-theoretical and scientific-applied nature can be derived, related to:

- Methodology and methods of social work

The methodology and methods of social work have been conceptualized from the positions of the integrative paradigm and the complex-oriented practice of social work. The status of social work as a profession with its own professional image and identity has been convincingly argued. A theoretical and methodological systematization of the operation of the methods for working with individual clients

has been made. The factors have been derived, the characteristics and limitations of the methods and their classification models have been determined.

Models and samples for practical elaboration of individual plans for social work with users of social services have been constructed, as well as a methodology of home visits in social work for the implementation of work activities in home environment.

#### - Gerontological social work

The gerontological social work has been defined and conceptualized through the prism of the peculiarities and regularities of aging and old age. The gerontological view for the social work with advanced in age and elderly people in field studies, preparation of students in social activities, training of specialists in social services for the elderly has been developed and applied.

The psychosocial dimensions of the status and the functioning of the advanced in age and the elderly people have been studied. The factors of influence, the models and the content of the programmes for individual and group social work in institutions for social services for elderly people have been determined. Connections and dependencies have been established between the needs of the users and the professional social support. Tools have been developed for group work and for assessing the functional autonomy and planning of support for social services users for the elderly people.

According to the submitted reference for noticed citations, the candidate has presented 161 citations in scientific publications of other authors, of which 62 citations of the publications submitted for participation in this competition.

### **Conclusion**

The materials submitted for the competition fully meet the requirements of the Law on the Academic Staff Development, the Regulations for the application of the Law on the Academic Staff Development and the Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. They present Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ginka

Mehandzhiyska as a leading scholar, lecturer and well-established expert. This gives me reason to confidently recommend to the scientific jury to propose to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Education at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" to elect Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ginka Andonova Mehandzhiyska for the academic position of "professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.4. Social work (Methods of social work, Gerontological social work).

19<sup>th</sup> April 2021

The statement was prepared by:

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Milena Yorgova**