

REVIEW

for participation in a competition for the academic position "Professor", announced in the State Gazette, issue 22 from 16.03. 2021 under professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy (Civic Education, Anti-Corruption Education) for the needs of FP at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", with the only candidate Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lilyana Ivanova Strakova

Education:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lilyana Ivanova Strakova graduated in 1981 from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" as a Master of Pedagogy. She began her professional career as a teacher at 22nd School and 135 School in Sofia (1989-1991). She defended a dissertation on "Moral development of students in grades 1-3" in the professional field of Pedagogy (theory of education and didactics) in 1990 and obtained the educational and scientific degree "Doctor". She specialized at Humboldt University - Berlin in 2008 and Jules Verne University, Amiens - 2010 in a teacher exchange program.

Teaching, research, social and administrative activities:

Career growth:

In the period 1991-1993 Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lilyana Strakova worked as an assistant at the University of National and World Economy. From 1993 she started working at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" as a chief assistant. In 2000 she acquired the scientific degree "Associate Professor". She is currently working in the Department of Social Activities.

Teaching workload:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. L. Strakova leads lecture courses and seminars in Experimental Pedagogy and Pedagogy - specialty "Social Activities", in FP at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (1993...), as well as disciplines in the curricula created by her. She was a lecturer in the Master's program "Business Management" - "Human Resources Management" (as a team) Southwestern University "Neofit Rilski" 2000-2003; Assoc. Prof. Dr. L. Strakova is also a member of a team for creating a curriculum for the specialty of Economic Pedagogy (together with the Faculty of Economics at Sofia University) 2002; She is the head of the master's program "Modern educational technologies" (with the acquisition of professional qualification "teacher") - from 2010 until now.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lilyana Strakova is an authoritative lecturer with strong professional skills for involving students in scientific knowledge and creating a sustainable research interest in current topics of pedagogical everyday life.

Participation in the creation of educational documentation:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lilyana Strakova develops scientifically based modern curricula for:

- ✓ Bachelors in: Pedagogy (Faculty of Biology, Faculty of Philosophy and Faculty of Physics); Theory of education-seminars; Experimental pedagogy - lectures and seminars; Civic education - lectures and seminars; Anti-corruption education - lectures and seminars; Sexological and pedagogical problems in children and adolescents - lectures and seminars.
- ✓ Masters in the programs "Modern Educational Technologies" and "Social Activities": The interaction between family and school; Working with children with aggressive behaviour; Educational and didactic values in the educational content; Strategies for increasing the effectiveness of the teacher as a class teacher; Professional values and norms in social work.

Administrative and public commitments:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lilyana Strakova is an authoritative leader - highly respected and valued by the faculty community as a modern manager, with excellent managerial skills and high morals. She has held and holds administrative positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" as: Head of the Centre for Civic Education since 2010, Head of the Department of Social Work" (2007-2014); Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Economics - Bachelor's Degree (2014-2019); Dean of the Faculty of Economics - from October 2019.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lilyana Strakova is sought after both as an expert and as a good organizer, able to work in a team and at the same time to defend a personal position. She is a member of the editorial board of the Yearbook of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", book Pedagogy, Sofia University from 2013 to the present. She is a member of the editorial board of an electronic magazine on Social Work, FP at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (CRCHRI) since 2012. She is a member of the Coordination Council of the Centre for Human Resources Development and Regional Initiatives at the MLSP.

Participation in research projects:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lilyana Strakova actively participates as a leader and member of socially significant scientific projects in authoritative Bulgarian and foreign scientific organizations:

- Study of the experience in the preparation of doctoral students in social activities - supervisor;
- The inter-institutional partnership for establishing the prestige of a social worker - member;
- Promotion of scientific achievements and practical innovations in social work through a scientific online journal - supervisor;
- Study of the experience of social work in municipal and local structures - manager;
- Social work through the eyes of practicing students and social workers - leader;

- Building institutional capacity of MLSP, CRCHRI - member of MLSP - International Labour Organization;
- Social work with underage and underage Roma mothers - manager;
- Management of the educational process in the Bulgarian school - member;
- Civic education and civic competencies in the Bulgarian school - member;
- Civic education of high school students - European experience and perspective - leader;
- Study of the reasons for dropping out of school in Bulgaria - member;
- Transparency and publicity through an academic ombudsman - member;
- Anti-corruption education and civil counteraction to corruption - member.

Citations:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lilyana Strakova is recognizable among the pedagogical community. Proof of this are the citations, which the author has attached:

Citations or reviews in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases of scientific information or in monographs and collective volumes (SCOPUS) and (WoS) /15/;

Citations in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review /10/;

Citation or reviews in non-peer-reviewed journals with scientific review /12/;

Other citations /7/

Analysis of scientific work:

In the competition for professor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lilyana Strakova participates with the following list of categorized publications:

1. Monograph, with the qualities of habilitation work: "Civic values and civic education", University Publishing House "St. Kliment Ohridski".
2. Articles and reports published in scientific journals, referenced, and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information (3).
3. Studies published in non-peer-reviewed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes (9).
4. Articles and reports published in non-peer-reviewed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes (24).
5. Chapter of a collective monograph (3).
6. University textbook used in the school network (1).

7. University textbook used in the school network (1).
8. Other materials published in representative non-pedagogical formats (4).

In a time of a difficult transition of our society, shaken by manifestations of corruption, moral deficit and existential crisis, pedagogical knowledge has a high responsibility to adolescents to strengthen those values and spiritual pillars in our reality that would stimulate harmony and humaneness in building diverse social relationships and would ensure the building of full-fledged personalities.

The pedagogical issues studied by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Strakova, dedicated to important topics, impress with their relevance, research insight and well-organized conceptual soundness. In her research, the author provides answers to fundamental theoretical questions and questions related to the organization of real pedagogical practice. In general, the overall work of the author is designed in several thematic areas: *civic education, anti-corruption education, value-oriented moral education; professional education; social inclusion and social integration*. There is a content connection between the studied areas, which on the one hand allows precise delineation of the studied pedagogical territories, their subject-object fields and on the other hand reveals their sections and dependencies at different levels of intersection and influences in the common semantic field of "knowledge of the human".

The problems related to civic education steadily attract the interest of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lilyana Strakova. They are considered on different informational and value-deciphered levels: as a *philosophical idea* in the historical development of a democratic society, as an *educational goal* in the context of European normative documents, as an *integrating factor* in formal and non-formal education, as a *value achievement* in personal development. This focus allows the author to fully present the multifaceted dimensions of civic education - *its relevance and nature, components and levels of applicability, stages of implementation, technological specifics within the various educational systems, problem areas related to its implementation*.

Civic education, as a main component of educational process and as a value achievement is not considered as an end in itself and encapsulated, but within the overall education and development of adolescents. Important connections and dependencies between the different aspects of education and civic behaviour of students, related to their age development (genesis of thinking, emotion, learning rules, mechanisms of inclusion in the rules of society, the role of incentives, building social skills). Very correctly and thoroughly the author reveals the essence of civic education in both formal and informal environments, such as school. It is in this plan that its integrative functions are emphasized, realized through the interdisciplinary connections in the individual subjects of the studied curriculum and the possibilities of extracurricular activities, which support the stimulation of children's initiative and self-actualization in the context of socially significant activities. socially acceptable behaviour. The topics that are subjected to content analysis are: standards for civic education, children's rights, topics about the peculiarities of the moral development of young students, the formation of anti-corruption culture based on current knowledge, presented in one hundred systematized answers, divided into several sections: "Definitions, Laws and Corruption, Corruption in Public

Life, Corruption in Bulgaria“. The main modern dimensions of citizenship, which should be realized in the conditions of formal and non-formal education, have been empirically studied. The author reveals the content of the political, cultural, and economic dimensions of this construction process and attaches great importance to education and the main value-oriented algorithms embedded in the modern educational paradigm and influenced by Christian teaching: *respect for others, mutual aid, empathy, charity*.

The conclusions reached by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lilyana Strakova were not made speculatively, but on the basis of research, which includes observations and live contact with various communities. In her research, the author focuses on the unresolved problems of practice related to the work of the teacher. Variants of qualification on the problems of civic education are offered, in order to raise the professional competence of the teacher. Special emphasis is placed on the value approach in education, as a guarantor for the personification and humanization of the educational process and its fulfilment with meaning for both students and teachers. The conducted researches correctly combine the different productions of famous authors with the clearly expressed research position of the candidate. They open up the prospect of further deepening and expanding the range of research related to the establishment of full-fledged personalities.

The habilitation thesis "Civic Values and Civic Education" presented in its whole the multi-year research and achievements of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lilyana Strakova, connected with civic education for an even more pronounced conceptual level, reflecting changes in the social context and possible variable technological solutions for achieving value-oriented educational results. The paper contains two main sections. The first is aimed at presenting and analysing the values of civil society in their historical development - from antiquity to the present day. The second section focuses on the essence, approaches, and models in the study of value-based civic education. Universal Christian values are seen as "the foundation of European civilization and a reference point in time for achieving good human relations". And the goals of civic education are successfully presented through the potential of the taxonomic approach. The content aspects of the acquisition of civic/democratic values by students and young people are defined in four main areas: *political and legal; social* with an emphasis on socio-emotional learning and civic education; *sociocultural and economic*. Some contemporary dimensions of European citizenship are also considered. This methodological breadth and precision in the definition make the content of the work markedly valuable and provoke individual involvement of the reader in a constructive extramural dialogue to outline realities, to seek influences, to mark strategies and work techniques.

The topic of civic education naturally intertwines with the topic of moral and anti-corruption education. In the collective monograph "Corruption in a Hundred Answers" Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lilyana Strakova gives interesting answers to a number of questions related to corruption in education: What is anti-corruption education? What are the main topics and their information cores in the teaching of anti-corruption issues? What are the teaching methods within civic education? The formation of social skills and the stimulation of personal initiative of adolescents are considered as a prerequisite for the formation of anti-corruption culture. In her publications (33, 42, 44, 45, 46), Assoc. Prof. Dr. L. Strakova defines the status of the

academic ombudsman as a mediator, as an advisor, as a catalyst for perspective change. The topic of corruption, as the author shares, is both delicate and debatable. However, this does not discourage her from being active in the establishment of an academic ombudsman at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and from participating in the development of documentation, outlining specific areas of corruption practices such as: irregularities in the educational process in higher school; manifestation of subjectivism in determining the norms for teaching workload; abuse of power of governing bodies; violations by the administration, etc. This activity can be considered as an exceptional merit, proving not only research commitment but also a high degree of civic awareness.

Social work is another topic in the research of Assoc. Prof. Dr. L. Strakova. Her involvement as a *creator* of documentation in the new university specialty "social activities" and a *teacher* of fundamental disciplines gives her the freedom to seek new perspectives in the work of a social worker. The methodological basis in her research is the value approach. Its integrating role at the individual level and at the level of the social system is revealed. The hierarchy of basic values in social work is commented: human rights, social justice, the right to choose, freedom. Topics related to the specifics and importance of *social entrepreneurship* are considered at the following levels: primary, secondary, and higher education; *European anti-discrimination policy in social work*. An interesting topic that the author traces in full is related to the theoretical and empirical projections of group therapy. The author systematizes and comments in detail on the "essential factors for personal change", namely: the assimilation of new cognitive structures through acquired information; creating a positive emotional attitude and life perspective; building new models of social expression; development of empathic behaviour; restoration of social and emotional comfort and security.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. L. Strakova participates in many other studies focused on current issues by marking trends and looking for adequate answers, relevant to both school and social practice. Such are the topics of vocational education and measuring education in entrepreneurship by outlining quantitative and qualitative indicators. The European experience and the possibilities for its application in the Bulgarian educational system are analysed in detail. The author is a participant in a representative team sociological survey, in which the causes of school dropouts are investigated and classified through rich research tools. The profile of children and their problems is outlined, as well as the profile of individual families and the social environment in which children grow up. The assessments and opinions of different target groups are covered, and this makes the results of the research extremely relevant and significant. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lilyana Strakova also develops delicate topics related to sexual education, improving the health culture of adolescents, working with underage Roma mothers, where on the one hand, early motherhood blocks their further education, and on the other hand, it leads to distortions in the upbringing and education of their children.

In the course of the research, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lilyana Strakova devotes a special place to the professional growth of teachers - their skills to work with students, the need for permanent enrichment of their qualifications.

Original scientific contributions, with relevant evidence attached:

I accept the scientific contributions noted by Assoc. Prof. Dr. L. Strakova, which can be summarized as follows:

- A scientifically substantiated argumentation for the application of the value approach as a methodological basis in the study of the organizational-functional and content aspects of civic education is proposed;
- A correct systematization and enrichment of the ideas about the essence, goals, content and methods of civic education in the democratizing modern school and in the extracurricular social environment has been achieved;
- Value-oriented specific innovative technological solutions for the implementation of civic education are proposed, combining the potential of the ancient Greek ideas, the ideas of enlightenment, the Bulgarian tradition and the latest scientific research;
- The potential opportunities and the real application of the competence approach in the course of civic and anti-corruption education are outlined and concretized in theoretical and practical terms;
- Existing curricula in civic education and anti-corruption education have been developed for the preparation of students in Pedagogy, Non-formal Education and Social Activities at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski";
- A model for integration between formal and non-formal education has been approved and tested;
- A pedagogical toolkit has been created for the moral development of primary school students within the framework of civic education;
- Strategies and techniques for social inclusion, social integration and improving the quality of life of vulnerable social groups are systematized;
- Outlining the typical pedagogical reasons for children dropping out of school in Bulgaria;
- Participation in the construction of a model for the work of the university ombudsman, oriented towards anti-corruption activities;
- An effective curriculum for anti-corruption education has been developed on a modular basis;
- The role of the teacher and the teaching profession for the inclusion of the values of the civil society is substantiated.

Conclusion:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lilyana Strakova is an erudite scientist, highly valued by students, professors from various university research fields, a wide teaching audience and social workers. She is a reliable partner in carrying out current and socially significant scientific research and discovering important patterns. The scientific spectrum of her research interests is characterized by depth, meaningfulness, and perspective.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lilyana Strakova fully meets the minimum national requirements of the Law on the development of the academic composition in the republic of Bulgaria.

The overall analysis of the teaching, research, and creative activity of **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lilyana Ivanova Strakova** gives me a reason to recommend to the esteemed Jury to formulate a proposal to the Faculty of Economics at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" for the academic position of "Professor" in the professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Civic Education, Anti-Corruption Education).

11.07.2021

Reviewer:

Prof. Emilia Vasileva, PhD