

## STATEMENT

concerning the competition for the academic position Professor in Pedagogy, PD 1.2 (Civic Education, Anti-corruption Education), announced in SG 22/16.03.2021

The only applicant for the position is Assoc. Prof. Dr Lilyana Strakova. Her academic career has developed exclusively at the Faculty of Education, Sofia University. In 1990 she defended her doctoral dissertation there. In 1993 she was appointed Chief Assistant Professor. Her habilitation took place in 2000. During these decades she prepared and realized a number of academic courses. In the field of Educational Science – *Experimental pedagogy, Civic education, Anti-corruption education, Sexual-pedagogical problems in adolescence*. In the field of Social Work – *Professional values and norms in social work*. In the MA Program Advanced Educational Technologies (she has been the Program's Director from 2010 to present) – *The school – parents interaction, Work with children with aggressive behavior, Educational values in the subjects' content, Strategies for promoting the efficiency of the teacher as class-tutor*. She has been academic advisor of PhD students. She has taught at Humboldt University in Berlin and at the University of Amiens.

Dr. Strakova has presented for participation in the competition one monograph, three articles in indexed journals, nine ones in reviewed journals and collections, and twenty four – in other journals and collections. Besides – three chapters in a collective monograph, one textbook, a collection of teaching materials, and four other academic publications. I shall consider here a number of features of her research achievements, which are especially noteworthy from my perspective – the perspective of a person who has actively dealt with civic education throughout the recent decades.

I mean, in the first place, the value-approach to civic education, which is especially characteristic for the research work of Dr Strakova. As she states in her note on her academic contributions, this amounts to “constructing a value model of civic education”. Emphasizing the formative role of civic education, the author constructs her model in a way which makes it immune to indoctrinations – a typical risk concerning the formative aspect of education.

An obvious merit of the monograph *Civic Values and Civic Education* is the historical “depth” of the research. I mean especially the author's study on N. Stanev's textbook *Civic Teaching*,

published in 1894. L. Strakova underscores the amazing congeniality between the main ideas in this unassuming little book of about 60 pages and the understanding of the nature of civic education which prevails nowadays. This part of the monograph links the present activities aimed at the advancement of this school subject with a substantial national intellectual tradition, thus providing grounds for a higher self-esteem of the people who work on curricula, syllabi and textbooks in Civic Education in our country, as well as of the ones who teach the subject – in the sense that these activities do not “import” foreign ideas, but rather refresh traditions of our own in this field.

Dr Strakova presents various aspects of her value-model also in other articles in prestigious journals and collections. She applies the value-based approach also to the subject matter of social work – in the articles *Dynamics of Values in Social Policy and Social Work* and *The Value-based Approach in Social Work*. Another interesting result of her research work is the outlining of prospects to use civic education activities as a link between formal and informal education (*Civic Education – a Factor for the Integration between Formal and Informal Education*).

Not less important are Dr Strakova’s contributions in the field of educational integration. A number of practices of such nature are presented in her article *Theoretical and practical dimensions of Civic Education as a model of out of class activities*. Here again Civic Education is treated as a factor forming socially positive values. In her paper *The value-development of the personalities of young people in the context of health and sexual education* empirical data are shown, concerning the value orientations among young Roma.

Especially useful for the “cause” of Civic Education in our country are, in my opinion, Dr Strakova’s publications concerning international experience in the field – the articles *On the training of teachers in Civic Education* and *Civic Education at secondary level in Bulgarian and French schools*.

An evidence of the high quality of Dr Strakova’s research work is the fact that publications of hers have been quoted at least 33 times by serious authors in prestigious journals (judging from similar cases, I suppose that this number is not comprehensive, because of the lack of reliable devices of quotation detection).

Dr Strakova's personal commitment to Civic and Anti-corruption Education is manifested also in her activities beyond the academic, in the narrow sense, sphere. In the documentation of the competition we can see an impressive list of the research and educational projects, in which she has taken part – in many of them as chief coordinator. I have personal experience from acting together with her as member of the Jury of several "editions" of the Competition for good practices in educational integration, organized annually by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Syndicate of Bulgarian Teachers. I have been impressed by the competence and energy which she has invested in the realization of these socially important events.

Another evidence of Dr Strakova's authority in the academic circles is the list of managerial positions which she has occupied at the University – Head of the *Social Work Department*, Director of the *Civic Education Center*, Director of the MA Program *Advanced Educational Technologies*, Deputy Dean of the *Faculty of Education*, Dean of the same Faculty. This fully deserved authority, together with the high achievements of Assoc. Prof. Dr Lilyana Strakova, which are unequivocally shown by the competition materials, are ample grounds for me to support wholeheartedly her application for the academic position Professor in Pedagogy (Civic and Anti-corruption Education).

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Prof. Dr Plamen Makariev