

**Statement for a Candidate's Application for the Academic Position "Associate Professor"**

at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of Pedagogy, field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of teaching... (Methodology of teaching Bulgarian language and literature in the primary stage of education), announced in State Journal, no. 56 of June 30, 2023

Associate Professor Dr. Maya Sotirova is the only candidate in the competition for associate Professor in the professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of teaching... (Methodology of teaching Bulgarian language and literature in the primary stage of education).

**1. Biographical data:**

**1.1. Education**

Associate Professor Dr. Maya Sotirova graduated in 1992 as a Master in Primary School Pedagogy at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of Primary and Preschool Pedagogy. In 1997, she defended her dissertation on the topic: "Non-standardization as an educational phenomenon" at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and received the educational and scientific degree "Doctor".

**1.2. Professional Development:**

Associate Professor Dr. Maya Sotirova began her professional career in 1993 as a **primary teacher** at SOU "St. Kliment Ohridski"; 36 "Maxim Gorky" secondary school. For the period of 1994 – 1997 she is also a part-time assistant professor at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of Primary and Preschool Pedagogy. From 2011 till present – associate professor at Southwest University "Neofit Rilski" – Faculty of Pedagogy.

**2. Analysis of teaching, research and creative activity:**

**2.1. Publications**

For the competition, Associate Professor Dr. Maya Sotirova submitted a total of 76 publications – 23 of which were created after the acquisition of the doctoral degree and are directly related to the subject of the competition, namely:

- Habilitation work - monograph (1);

- Articles and reports published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information (10);
- Articles and reports published in non-referenced peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes (12).

The main focus of the research efforts of Associate Professor Dr. Maya Sotirova and her scientific achievements is related to the contemporary paradigm of teaching Bulgarian language and literature to elementary school students – in its completeness and relevance. With an emphasis on research insight and practical consistency, particularly significant topics are considered, such as: personalized learning in primary classes; the development of key competences with a focus on communication skills; the intensive nature of the multicultural educational environment and its claims for non-standardization and personalization; education of children with special educational needs; career guidance in multicultural education.

In the habilitation thesis "Personalized Bulgarian language teaching at the primary stage of the basic educational degree" the essence and specifics of the personalized education are clarified. A conceptual framework of modern didactic technology is proposed, covering in synergetic relation the main elements of education: goals, educational content, methods, means and forms of education. The challenges posed by the new social context and the typology of the modern child are also specified.

A unifying theme in the entire work of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Maya Sotirova is the formation of key competences, with a focus on teaching Bulgarian language and literature. Very competently, the author specifies the approaches in the work of the teacher, penetrating not only into the philosophical-pedagogical and value core of the problem, but also into the possible variational technological solutions. The leading role of the individual approach in the teacher's work is justly emphasized.

## **2.2. Participation in scientific forums**

Associate Prof. Dr. Maya Sotirova impresses with her research and creative activity. She participated in 17 national and 9 international conferences, 7 training forums, 17 national and international projects – all related to current problems of education, reflected competently in her publications.

## **3. Citations**

Associate Prof. Dr. Maya Sotirova is recognizable among the pedagogical community with her scientific authority and achievements. This is evidenced by the references to her publications by various Bulgarian and foreign authors (50).

#### **4. Awards:**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Maya Sotirova was elected Person of the Year – Dupnitsa 2007. Category "Civic Activity". Association "Worthy of Dupnitsa"

#### **5. Scientific contributions:**

I accept the scientific contributions formulated by Associate Prof. Maya Sotirova. Apart from a markedly practical-applied character, they also have a deep social meaning. And that makes them especially valuable.

In summary, the contributions can be formulated as follows:

1. A conceptual framework for the development of a didactic technology of personalized education in the Bulgarian language at the primary stage of education is proposed;
2. The competence orientation of primary school education is considered in the context of the new educational paradigm, which links the mastery of key competences with the achievement of the student's basic level of functional literacy;
3. The parameters of intercultural communicative competence are studied in depth as one of the key goals of modern education. It is considered within the framework of general communicative competence, which determines the close relationship between the issues of linguistic diversity and the social adaptability of the individual;
4. The specific difficulties encountered by students of minority ethnicity in the process of mastering reading during the literacy period and in the process of forming reading interests and reading culture in literature lessons (reading) are highlighted. Methodological guidelines have been developed for optimizing reading instruction in culturally heterogeneous classes;
5. The specific outlines of intercultural competence in the preparation of career guidance specialists for the school education system and in the preparation of mentors in a dual education system are competently presented.

#### **Conclusion:**

Associate Professor Dr. Maya Sotirova meets all the minimum requirements laid down in Art. 2b of ZRASRB ((Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria). She is recognizable among the pedagogical community as an authoritative scientist and a respected colleague and pedagogical specialist.

The complete analysis of the scientific profile of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Maya Sotirova gives me the reason to confidently recommend to the esteemed members of the scientific jury to propose to the Faculty council of the Faculty of pedagogy at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" to support the candidacy of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Maya Sotirova for the academic position of "**Associate Professor**".

3.10.2023

Statement prepared by: .....

(Prof. Dr. Emilia Vasileva)