

STATEMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Rozalina Engels-Kritidis, DSc,
member of the scientific jury
appointed with Order № RD 38-448 dated 25 Sep 2020
of the Rector of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”
regarding competition for appointment to academic position “Assoc. Professor”
of professional category **1.2. Pedagogy (Preschool Pedagogy – Psychological-
pedagogical fundamentals of information culture)**,
announced in National Gazette, issue 67 dated 28 July 2020.

Candidates who have submitted documents for participation in the competition:
Chief Assistant Milka Nikolova Terziyska-Stefanova, PhD
and **Veronika Hristova Racheva, PhD**

1. Accuracy of submitted documentation and compliance with effective regulations.

The documentation submitted by both candidates in the competition is well-prepared and allows for complete quantitative and qualitative evaluation as per the requirements of the Law for Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the law’s application, as well as the Regulations of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

2. Biographical data of the candidates: education, academic and scientific experience.

Chief Assistant Milka Nikolova Terziyska-Stefanova, PhD completed her higher education in “Primary School Pedagogy” in Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Blagoevgrad branch, in 1983. During the 1985-1997 period, Milka Terziyska-Stefanova served as full-time assistant and senior assistant in the Higher Pedagogical Institute (Southwest University “Neofit Rilski”) – Blagoevgrad.

In the 1983-1984 and 2000-2017 periods, under contracts of various durations, she has been a long-term part-time assistant on *History of Pedagogy and Bulgarian Education* in the Higher Pedagogical Institute (Southwest University “Neofit Rilski”) – Blagoevgrad, in the Faculty of Pedagogy and the Faculty of Preschool Pedagogy of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, as well as a part-time lecturer on *Primary School Pedagogy, Comparative Education, and Comparative Preschool Education* in the Faculty of Primary and Preschool Pedagogy of Sofia University “St. Kliment

Ohridski” where, as of 2011, she also leads a selectable lecture course on *History of Childhood*, developed by herself.

In 2007 Milka Terziyska-Stefanova successfully defended her doctoral dissertation in the area of *History of Pedagogy and Bulgarian Education* (code 05.07.02) in the Faculty of Pedagogy of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, titled “Literary and Educational Activity of the Rila Monastery (from 10th century AD until the Bulgarian Liberation).

Chief Assistant Terziyska, PhD has been a guest lecturer of Università degli Studi di Padova, Padua – Italy (2008); Université Paris 8, France (2010); Università degli studi di Bergamo, Italy (2015), where she has led lectures in Bachelor and Master levels; she has also been a guest researcher in Università degli studi di Macerata (Italy) for the 2013-2014 academic year, and others.

As of 01 Sep 2017, she is a Chief Assistant on *Psychological-Pedagogical fundamentals of information culture, Comparative Preschool Education, and History of Childhood* at the Faculty of Educational Sciences and the Arts, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

Chief Assistant Terziyska, PhD is a member of the Comitato scientifico (Scientific Committee) of the online journal *Gli Argonauti: Rivista di studi storico-educativi e pedagogici*, published by Università degli studi di Messina, Italy (2020); a member of the International Referee Committee of the “Formazione, lavoro, persona” Journal of the Università degli studi di Bergamo, Italy (2016-2018); a contributor to the Journal of History of Education and Children’s Literature on a project for preparation of international bibliography on the history of education and children’s literature (2014-2015).

Veronika Hristova Racheva, PhD completed her higher education in specialty “Primary School Pedagogy with Foreign Language” (2004) and the Master-degree program “Early Foreign Language Education in Preschool Institutions” (2006) at the Faculty of Primary and Preschool Pedagogy of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. In 2009 she acquired the educational qualification level “Master of Art History” from the National Academy of Art – Faculty of Fine Arts. In 2015 she completed defense of the educational and scientific level “Doctor” on *Theory of Upbringing and Didactics (Preschool Pedagogy)* in Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Faculty of Primary and Preschool Pedagogy (currently Faculty of Educational Sciences and the Arts), with a dissertation titled: “Educating Socially-oriented Attitude in a Multicultural Environment”. In 2013 Veronika Racheva completed a doctoral specialization in the Doctoral School, Institute of Education, London University, program titled *Methods of Pedagogical Research*, and during 2014-2015 she completed a specialization *Program for Virtual Teachers* by the University of California, Irvine.

Veronika Racheva's professional experience is largely connected with the field of education: she has worked as a teacher of English language for children from 5 to 15 years old, as a methodologist in an educational center, as an expert/manager of educational projects, as an educator of teachers, and others. As of 2015 she is Manager of "Learning Activities" at "Proznanie". Her direct academic experience is connected with leading seminars on *Preschool Pedagogy* of Bachelor-level students in the full-time specialty "Preschool and Primary School Pedagogy) for the 2012-2013 academic year, at the Faculty of Primary and Preschool Pedagogy of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", as well as her appointment as of 2015 as a part-time lecturer at the Faculty of Pedagogy, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", where she leads a selectable course on "Teaching and Learning in a Virtual Classroom" in the Master-level program "Information and Communication Technologies in Education". Additionally, as of 2015 Veronika Racheva, PhD leads an interactive seminar on "Synchronous Distance Teaching in High School – Instruments, Methodology, Practice" at the Department for Information and Development of Teachers, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Bearing in mind the above, it can be concluded that *the academic experience of Chief Assistant Milka Nikolova Terziyska-Stefanova, PhD is significantly more expansive, as well as more closely connected with the exact subject of this competition* – regarding both intensity and variation of academic courses led.

3. Evaluation of submitted documentation according to scientific metrics for acquisition of the academic position of "Assoc. Professor".

Regarding quantity measurement related to the separate groups of criteria, taking into account all submitted works on the subject of the competition, *both candidates fulfil the scientific metric requirements for acquisition of the academic position of Assoc. Professor*, but from examination of the submitted documentation (as well as the table below) it is evident that *Chief Assistant Milka Terziyska-Stefanova, PhD has submitted a scientific production that corresponds to double the amount of points compared to the total points submitted by Veronika Racheva, PhD.*

Criteria	Number of points	
	Chief Assistant Milka Terziyska-Stefanova, PhD	Veronika Racheva, PhD
Criteria Group A	50	50
Criteria Group V(B)	100	100
Criteria Group G(Γ)	642,5	240
Criteria Group D(Δ)	170	60
Total number of points	962,5	450

4. General review of the works submitted for participation in the competition.

Chief Assistant Milka Nikolova Terziyska-Stefanova, PhD has submitted for participation in the competition 31 scientific works: two parts of a monographic habilitation work, 2 monographs not presented as main habilitation work, 1 monograph based on defended dissertation for educational-scientific level of “Doctor”, 10 studies, 6 articles, 9 reports, and 1 review. The publications submitted for evaluation are in Bulgarian, French, English, and Italian languages.

Veronika Hristova Racheva, PhD participates in the competition with 14 scientific works: one monographic habilitation work, 1 monograph based on defended dissertation for educational-scientific level of “Doctor”, 2 articles, and 1 report, published in peer-reviewed scientific publications indexed in world-class scientific information databases, as well as 9 articles and reports, published in non-peer-reviewed journals with scientific review or published in collected editions. Three of the works submitted for participation in the competition are in English language.

As it is evident, *with regard to quantity, the scientific production submitted for review by Chief Assistant Terziyska, PhD is significantly larger in volume.*

Regarding the *content and thematic aspect of the works of the two candidates, Chief Assistant Terziyska’s publications cover a significantly wider viewpoint and are closer to the exact subject of the competition and the educational content of the future academic disciplines* which the selected candidate will lead. Information Culture as a concept is present (in one way or other) in the works of both candidates; in Chief Assistant Terziyska’s works this central issue for the competition is examined with the use of a holistic and systematized historic-pedagogical approach. This is evident from the focus of the habilitation works of the two candidates: Chief Assistant Terziyska, PhD’s work is titled “The Information Revolutions in Education” (parts 1 and 2), while Veronika Racheva’s work is titled “Early Foreign Language Education in a Synchronous Virtual Learning Environment”.

5. Highlighting the contribution elements in the scientific-research activity of the candidates.

I would like to highlight the following key contribution elements in the scientific works submitted for participation in the competition by **Chief Assistant Milka Terziyska-Stefanova, PhD**:

- Through the interdisciplinary approach applied, there is a complete

description of the concept of “information culture”, viewed as a defining factor for human development, while its essence – not as a new phenomenon in the contemporary work, but as a continuous process that began at the dawn of human societies, whose result is the development of world culture.

- There is an overview of the increasing importance of information in the historical development of humanity, in which there is analysis of the information revolutions and the changes in the media for receiving, processing, and delivering information.
- Arguments are presented in support of the information culture being a natural part of general human culture, which humans acquire through education based on the accumulated experiences of past generations.
- There is development of a study curriculum that is closely related to the exact subject of the competition, namely on *Psychological-pedagogical Fundamentals of Information Culture* – an academic discipline which Chief Assistant Terziyska, PhD leads as of 2017 at the Faculty of Educational Sciences and the Arts of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.
- The history and essence of childhood has been outlined, from ancient to contemporary times; additionally, the childhood’s significance in the contemporary information society has been assessed, highlighting the importance of each specialist working with children being also familiar with the theory and history of childhood.
- A study curriculum has been developed for one of the first university courses in Bulgaria on *The History of Childhood* at the Faculty of Educational Sciences and the Arts of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

The following key contribution elements can be highlighted in the scientific works presented for participation in the competition by **Veronika Racheva, PhD:**

- There are reviews of theoretical studies related to information culture and its psychological and pedagogical aspects in the context of education.
- Key technical, social, and psychological-pedagogical characteristics of synchronous virtual learning environments are defined and the specifics of pedagogical interaction during synchronous virtual teaching as a means of forming information culture are systematized.
- There is research and analysis of practices, opinions, and evaluations of preschool and primary school teachers of foreign language with regard to synchronous virtual tuition with a view toward building a competent methodology for formation of information culture during preschool age via the use of appropriate information and communication technologies and tools.

It is clear that *the contribution elements highlighted in the scientific*

production of Chief Assistant Milka Terziyska-Stefanova, PhD in their entirety are much more closely related to development of scientific results namely in the specific field given in the competition title (Preschool Pedagogy – Psychological-Pedagogical Fundamentals of Information Culture).

CONCLUSION-EVALUATION:

Bearing in mind everything highlighted above, I stand firm on the position that **the more appropriate of the two candidates for acquiring the academic position of “Assoc. Professor”** in professional category **1.2. Pedagogy (Preschool Pedagogy – Psychological-Pedagogical Fundamentals of Information Culture)** in the competition announced in National Gazzette, issue 67 dated 28 July 2020, for the needs of the Faculty of Educational Sciences and the Arts of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” is **Chief Assistant Milka Nikolova Terziyska-Stefanova, PhD** and **I confidently recommend selecting her for the academic position of “Assoc. Professor”** and **I give my positive evaluation and vote** for her selection.

31 Oct 2020

Assoc. Prof. Rozalina Engels-Kritidis, DSc,
member of the Scientific Selection Jury