

**SOFIA UNIVERSITY "ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI**  
**FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**  
**POSITION PAPER**

by Assoc. Prof. Albena Taneva, PhD

member of the scientific jury appointed by the order of the Rector of the Sofia University St.  
Kliment Ohridski RD 38-186 of April 13, 2021

for the open call for the academic position of PROFESSOR in the professional field 3.3 Political  
Science (local self-governance),

the only applicant is Assoc. Prof. Dr. Milena Stefanova

All formal legal requirements for applying to the competition have been met, all necessary references, documents and publications have been submitted.

**1. General characteristics of the candidate's works**

The candidate Assoc. Prof. Milena Stefanova, PhD (the only candidate in the competition, announced for the needs of the Department of Public Administration - Faculty of Philosophy, Sofia University) has a total of over 40 publications related to the topic of the competition. They are distributed as follows: 2 monographs (1 habilitation thesis and 1 monograph, 2 chapters of collective monographs, 2 studies, one of which is in English and 6 articles, of which 1 in English, published in a scientific journal indexed in editions of WoS). It should be noted that none of the publications was used in a previous procedure for completion of academic degree and academic position.

Assoc. Prof. Stefanova demonstrated research capacity on the topic of the competition based on her many years of experience as a leader and member in 22 research projects in the field of this competition. The candidate's teaching profile also highlights impressive experience on this topic. Assoc. Prof. Stefanova is the holder of 9 courses, supervisor of 5 successfully accomplished their degree doctoral students and of over 20 graduates in MA programs. These formal characteristics of Milena Stefanova's work and experience as a candidate for the scientific title "Professor" are indicative of the way in which she has built her name as one of the leading experts in the field of local government. She has worked throughout her career to study, develop and establish the theory and practice of local government as an independent scientific field according to the highest standards of the theory of governance.

Based on the submitted documents and materials for participation in the competition, it can be concluded that the candidate Assoc. Prof. Milena Stefanova not only meets, but significantly exceeds the minimum national requirements for a successful result in this competition. As a member of the scientific jury, I must add that I have known the work of Milena Stefanova as a colleague for 30 years. I can confirm that the formalized characteristics of the submitted documents in the competition fully reflect the nature of her interests, high expertise in the subject area of the competition, her dedication as a colleague and educator, as well as her numerous achievements in the development of knowledge and practice of local authorities and self-government.

## **2. Specific significance of the contributions to theory and practice of local self-government**

The specific reading of the works presented for the competition by Assoc. Prof. Milena Stefanova shows that they are the result of her in-depth scientific research for many years, consistency and upgrading of her achievements from earlier periods of her scientific biography. The consistency and sustainability of her scientific interests and the specific expertise she has acquired and developed throughout her career are impressive. The review of the specifically presented publications and scientific results on the topic of this competition demonstrate that they meet the highest scientific standards in the field. The contributing nature of each of them is well-founded and proven.

In particular, the contributions of those presented in the competition procedure are the following: "Comparative Studies of Local Self-Government" (2021) and "Local Government and Local Self-Government, Second Revised and Supplemented Edition" (2021) contribute to the analysis of the methodology of comparative research of local self-government as a field of political science research. The institutional approach in the comparative research of local self-government is developed by her for further application. It is worth noting the applied nature of these contributions in comparative studies of the political decisions of international organizations and especially in the field of local self-government in carrying out reforms. Especially important are the contributions of Assoc. Prof. Milena Stefanova for the study of

Bulgarian practice in the field of local self-government in regard of the development of legislation and the expansion of subsidiarity, but also concerning the challenges in implementing the European Charter of Local Self-Government. The publications presented by the candidate in this competition are also important regarding the potential of local government in horizontal policies at municipal level and the importance of municipal cooperation. Each of the presented scientific papers has contribution both to theory and practice based on the analysis to the legislation in the field of local self-government and its institutional capacity, national and international cases of the models of interaction between central and local authorities. Assoc. Prof. Stefanova has contributed to the understanding and further development of decentralization as a process of providing power and resources at lower levels in the public

administration system as a factor for achieving balance and efficiency of the public administration system itself.

The capacity of the candidate Assoc. Prof. Milena Stefanova in the subject field of this competition is also the profile of citations of her publications - 95, incl. editions listed in Scopus and WoS, correctly indicated in the attached institutional references.

### **3. Conclusion**

The presented publications of the candidate and evidence of her experience as a lecturer and researcher in the field of local self-government give grounds to conclude a recommendation to the scientific jury to award Assoc. Prof. Milena Stefanova the position of "PROFESSOR" in professional field 3.3 - Political Science (local self-government), in order to recognize the standards achieved by her for this highest academic position. Her experience as a lecturer and practitioner, her experience in the management of various academic levels - Head of Department, Deputy Dean and Deputy Rector additionally highlight all the reasons for my positive vote in support of the candidacy of Assoc. Prof. Milena Stefanova to be awarded the position of "Professor" of Sofia University in professional field 3.3. - political sciences (local self – government).

Sofia, June 26, 2021

Signature: