

## OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Natasha Lyubomirova Ivanova (PhD, School of Higher Education "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski") - member of the scientific jury in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor for the needs of the School of Higher Education "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski", announced in State Gazette No. 20/08.03.2024 in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of Education and Didactics)

Subject: the scientific, scientific-applied and professional-academic activity and production of Asst. Dr. Mariana Ivanova Mincheva-Rizova

### **I. Summary of the candidate's scientific output and activities**

Chief asst. Dr. Mariana Ivanova Mincheva-Rizova - the only candidate in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of Education and Didactics) - meets the requirements of the Regulations of Shumen University "Episkop Konstantin Preslavski".

Chief as. Dr. Mariana Ivanova Mincheva-Rizova has defended Master's degree in Pedagogy at the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in 1986 with an additional major in philosophy. In 2014 she obtained her doctoral thesis at the "Episcop Konstantin Preslavski" University. In the period 1986 - 1996 she was a teacher of philosophical subjects in Varna.

Since 1987 she has been a lecturer in Didactics for 1 year, then 3 years. For a period of 2 years at the Faculty of Art, Culture and Mass Communications, Chernorizets Hrabar Free University of Varna as a senior assistant professor and organizer and supervisor of the pedagogical competence of students, developing curricula on the methodology of teaching in the disciplines of the philosophical cycle and conducting seminar exercises, as well as conducting trainings for the development of social skills of students. From 1996 until now Mariana Mincheva-Rizova has been working at the Shumen university: in the period 1996-1997 as an assistant professor of pedagogy; in 1997-1999 as a senior assistant professor of pedagogy and from 1999 until now as a chief assistant professor of pedagogy.

Chief asst. Dr. Mariana Mincheva-Rizova is continuously upgrading her qualifications, having attended a total of 31 thematic courses, seminars and workshops since 1992.

The candidate participated in the competition with a sufficient volume of up-to-date scientific production. 21 publications have been submitted: 3 monographs, one of which is self-published, 2 studies, one of which is self-published, 16 articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes at home and abroad. Mariana Mincheva-Rizova has also co-authored 12 teaching aids and methodological manuals. A total of 34 citations of the candidate are noted, 9 of which are in monographs and peer-reviewed collective volumes. The scientific production with which he participated in the competition corresponds to his specificity and scientific specialty.

Chief as. Dr. Mariana Mincheva-Rizova has participated in 12 university, 11 national and 34 international scientific and educational projects.

The candidate's scientific searches define a sustained and creative interest in the thematic areas of her research achievements: Civic Education, Intercultural Education, Sex Education, Early Childhood Development, Child Rights Education, Philosophy for Children, Positive Communication, Integrative and Interactive Learning, etc.

The teaching activity of the chief asst. Dr. Mariana Mincheva-Rizova includes:

- Seminar exercises in the disciplines:
  - Learning Theory;
  - Educational psychology;
  - General and age psychology;
  - Group Psychology;
  - Psychology of the student classroom;
  - Leadership in Education;
  - Pedagogy;
  - Educational theory;
  - Philosophy of education.
- Qualification activity which includes:
  - Organization and conduct of qualification courses for pedagogical specialists;
  - Organization and conduct of training sessions with pedagogical specialists for the development of personal and social skills;
  - Organizing and conducting master classes for multiplier teachers and for candidates for I and II PQD;
  - Scientific supervision of postgraduate students and participation in committees for awarding I and II PQD, etc. A total of 39 successfully defended postgraduate students under the guidance of head as. Dr. Mariana Mincheva-Rizova.

Rizova is a valuable expert trainer of teachers and other professionals, parents and students of different age groups on current topics related to prevention of risky behavior, communication problems, children's rights, etc., at the invitation of principals and class teachers.

## **II. Evaluation of the scientific and practical results and contributions of the creative production submitted for the competition:**

The reference to the main contributions in the candidate's production corresponds to real scientific and professional achievements, which are the consequence of many years of research and extensive professional experience. Principal as. Dr. Mariana Mincheva-Rizova studies current problems of the educational system in Bulgaria in a period of normative reorganization, reform in educational content, introduction of new technologies of education and change of public attitudes towards educational institutions.

Highlighted are:

- A systematic review of the regulatory framework of educational institutions (with a focus on kindergarten) with a view to its democratization and alignment with European values and strategic documents in the field of educational policies for early childhood development.
- Explored key understandings and attitudes among teachers and parents regarding school/kindergarten as a place for practicing the rights of learners the place of parents and expectations of parents as a change agent in the education system; the quality of teaching and teachers' skills; the place of play in kindergarten, etc.
- Developed standards for civic education in kindergarten, including training on children's rights.
- Developed non-formal education programmes and models to prevent sexual exploitation among young people with intellectual disabilities and social needs living in Roma ghetto settings.
- Studied the concept of "Skills for Life", recommended by international organizations such as the World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, USAID, OECD, as a methodology for reforming education.
- Significant scientific contribution of As. Dr. Mariana Mincheva-Rizova are the developed authorial models:
  - Sexuality education of students 5-7 grade, as an alternative to the approaches set in the field of medical knowledge;
  - for child rights education for primary school students;
  - for monitoring ethnocentrism and assessing the intercultural potential of textbooks (co-authored);

- RAMO educational programme for the development of intercultural experiences in primary school age children (co-authored);
  - Educational programme "Co-participation" in psychology, philosophy and civic education for students in lower secondary and upper secondary education (co-authored).

Chief Asst. Prof. Dr. Mariana Mincheva-Rizova fulfils the requirements of the Law on Academic Associate Professor:

- She has obtained the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the same scientific field since 2014.
- She participates with scientific production, which is under the terms of the announced competition, and she meets the minimum national requirements under Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Law on Research and Development (with a minimum total number of points 400, she has 447.5).

In quantitative and substantive terms, I evaluate Dr. Rizova's overall scientific production and academic activity as meeting the requirements of the announced competition.

Conclusion:

The materials submitted by the only candidate in the competition meet all the requirements of the Law on Research and Development. The scientific and teaching qualifications of Chief Asst. Prof. Dr. Mariana Mincheva-Rizova's academic and teaching qualifications are available. The results she has achieved in her teaching and research activities are in line with the specific requirements of the Faculty of Education of Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen.

As a result of the acknowledged scientific contributions and achievements, following from the analysis of the scientific production and teaching activity of the candidate in the present competition, I give my positive vote and propose to the members of the esteemed jury to award to Chief Asst. Prof. Dr. Mariana Ivanova Mincheva-Rizova the academic position of Associate Professor in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of Education and Didactics) for the needs of the Shumen University "Episcop Konstantin Preslavski" (DIKPO - Varna).

Date: 21.06.2024

Signature:

Assoc. Prof. Natasha Ivanova, PhD