

## STATEMENT OF OPINION

by **Prof. Dr. Zhaneta Stoykova Dobрева, DSc**

**Trakia University, Stara Zagora**

**Regarding:** The academic position of “Associate Professor” in “Integrated English language training of pedagogy students through the use of culture-based and humane and environmental content” in Area of Higher Education 1. Pedagogical Sciences, Professional Field 1.2 Pedagogy, announced by Trakia University and published in the Bulgarian State Gazette, issue 81, dated 11.10.2022, in connection with the application for the aforementioned position, submitted by Assist. Prof. **Anna Lyubomirova Arnaudova – Otuzbirova, PhD.**

The competition procedure for the academic position of „Associate Professor” with the participation of Assist. Prof. **Anna Lyubomirova Arnaudova – Otuzbirova, PhD**, has been conducted in accordance with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules of Procedure for the Occupation of Academic Positions at Trakia University. For the purposes of the competition, a Reference was submitted on fulfillment of the minimum requirements for holding the academic position “Associate Professor” and compliance with the Rules on the collection, updating and use of scientometric indicators for the acquisition of academic degrees and occupation of academic positions. The minimum requirements under this criterion amount to a total of 400 points, while the candidate has been awarded 610 points. To the best of my knowledge, no mistakes or rule violations have taken place in the course of the competition procedure.

Assist. Prof. **Anna Lyubomirova Arnaudova – Otuzbirova, PhD** is the sole candidate participating in the present competition. In 2016, she was awarded a PhD in Education and Didactics. The candidate holds a degree in English

Philology from the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

Between 2007 and 2009, she completed a Master’s degree in “Ecology and Environmental Protection” at the Faculty of Agriculture at Trakia University – Stara Zagora. Since 2003, she has been employed as an English language instructor and lecturer at the Faculty of Education at Trakia University, Stara Zagora.

Between 2019 and 2021, she completed postgraduate studies on “Animal Welfare, Ethics and Legislation” at the University of Winchester, United Kingdom, and was awarded the title “Specialist in Animal Welfare, Ethics and Legislation”.

Her scientific interests fall within the domain of the integration of educational content in English language learning and humane and environmental education.

### **Scholarly works and publications.**

For the purposes of the competition procedure, Assist. Prof. **Anna Lyubomirova Arnaudova – Otuzbirova**, PhD has submitted 23 publications, consisting of 18 articles, 1 sole-authored monograph serving the function of the habilitation paper, 1 chapter from a co-authored monograph and 1 instructional material. Out of the aforementioned publications, I shall focus my review on the ones published subsequent to the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”.

In the monograph titled “*English Language and Humane and Environmental Education: Interdisciplinary Projections*”, Assist. Prof. **Anna Lyubomirova Arnaudova – Otuzbirova**, PhD examines the theoretical foundations and practical application of the integrated study of the English language through the use of humane and environmental educational content. It presents the fundamental characteristics, historical development, demands, challenges and benefits of foreign language learning integrated within the context of

environmental education. The author delineates the relevant projections of the national policies within the context of the European environmental policies and regulations. She emphasizes the significance of the university training and education of pedagogy specialists (teachers), and particularly that of the future primary school teachers, for the accomplishment of the aforementioned goals.

The candidate develops and presents many thought-provoking ideas in her series of articles on the integration of humane education in the teaching practice.

In the article titled “Humane Education – Benefits and Challenges”, Arnaudova attempts to define the concept of humane education by presenting a brief summary of its historical development and highlighting its advantages. The benefits of introducing humane education in the teaching process are discussed and some of the challenges related to its practical implementation are described. Further, several important conclusions are drawn concerning the integration of humane education within the teaching practice for the purpose of improving the quality of education.

In the article titled “Impact of the integrated approach to English language learning through environmental educational content on the linguistic competence of pedagogy university students”, published in the Yearbook of the Faculty of Education, Trakia University – Stara Zagora, Volume 13, 2016, the author presents the results of her empirical research on the application of Content and Language Integrated Learning. The participants in the study are pedagogy students, divided into two experimental and two control groups. The subjects in the experimental groups underwent studies in environmental education in English, with the use of the integrated approach. The analysis of the results shows better progress in the experimental groups, particularly in the one where the participants had a lower starting level of linguistic competence.

The 2017 publication “Impact of Content and Language Integrated Learning on certain outcomes of the training of pedagogy university students” explores similar topics. It is dedicated to the problem of the practical application of a

comparatively novel approach to education, known as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in the training of pedagogy students. This approach assigns equal significance to the foreign language being studied (English) and the other subject covered in the learning process (Environmental Education).

In her 2022 article “Classroom pets in primary school education: Benefits and Welfare Concerns”, the author Arnaudova poses and attempts to answer the question whether pet animals are suitable for classroom learning in terms of their welfare, and whether their presence in the classroom can be conducive to the development of a humane attitude towards animals among the learners.

In another of her publications from 2022 titled “CITES and the International Law on the Protection of Wild Animals“, Arnaudova poses and explores a pressing issue related to the humane treatment of wild animals and their protection. The author emphasizes the need for future action in order to overcome the discrepancy between wildlife conservation and animal welfare.

Based on the assessment of the bulk of Assist. Prof. Dr. **Anna Lyubomirova Arnaudova – Otuzbirova’s** publications, the candidate’s **scientific contributions** can be formulated. Below, I have presented those contributions that I regard as most significant:

1. The theoretical, methodological, practical and applied aspects and benefits of the implementation of a comparatively novel approach to education, related to the integration of non-linguistic disciplines in foreign language training (Content and Language Integrated Learning – CLIL) are discussed by the candidate. Research has been conducted and evidence is presented in support of the positive impact of Content and Language Integrated Learning on the development of the learners’ linguistic competence and speech skills. Evidence is presented supporting the demand for and viability of the implementation of the CLIL approach in the field of higher education and, in particular, in the training of future primary schools teachers.

2. The fundamental characteristics of the terms “environmental education” and “humane education” are analyzed. A concept is proposed for the development of humane and environmental education, offering the opportunity for successful application of an interdisciplinary approach to English language learning through the use of topic-driven educational content.

3. The effectiveness of humane and environmental education is supported with evidence in regard to its applicability in education and training, and, in particular, in the English language training of future primary school teachers.

4. The environmental attitudes of university students are tracked using an approved version of the American “New Ecological Paradigm Scale”, developed by Dunlap et al. (2000). The positive influence of the integration of ecological content in English language learning is highlighted in terms of its effect on the learners’ environmental and behavioral attitudes, and their readiness for the application of this type of training in practice.

5. The instructional material *Language and Culture Aspects of the English-speaking World* (2010) was developed for the needs of the English language learning of pedagogy university students, based on a prototype technology for the application of Content and Language Integrated Learning, and designed to enhance intercultural competence and improve learners’ communication skills, as well as a number of basic language skills.

Assist. Prof. Dr. **Anna Lyubomirova Arnaudova – Otuzbirova**’s publications have been cited multiple times in scientific literature and as of the date of writing of this Statement of Opinion, evidence has been presented for 10 such citations.

#### **Teaching activity.**

Assist. Prof. Dr. **Anna Lyubomirova Arnaudova – Otuzbirova**’s teaching activity is characterized by its interesting content profile. She teaches 5

courses in Bachelor's degree programs, for which she has developed her own original curricula, namely:

1. "English language and culture" - for the Bachelor's degree program in Primary School Pedagogy with Foreign Language Training
2. "Integration of educational content in English language learning" for the Bachelor's degree program in Primary School Pedagogy with Foreign Language Training
3. "English language and environmental education" - for the Bachelor's degree program in Primary School Pedagogy with Foreign Language Training
4. "Humane and environmental education" - for the Bachelor's degree program in Pre-school and Primary School Pedagogy
5. "Humane and environmental education" - for the Bachelor's degree program in Primary School Pedagogy with Foreign Language Training

## **Conclusion**

On the grounds of the assessment of the research and teaching activity of Assist. Prof. **Anna Lyubomirova Arnaudova – Otuzbirova**, PhD, presented above, my personal interpretation of her ideas based her publications, and my opinion on the significance of her views, conclusions, theoretical models and research results, I declare my firm conviction in the candidate's suitability for the academic position "Associate Professor" in Area of Higher Education 1. Pedagogical Sciences, Professional Field 1.2 Pedagogy, scientific field "Integrated English language training of pedagogy students through the use of culture-based and humane and environmental content", as an expression whereof I vote "**Yes**" in my capacity as voting member of the scientific jury.

24.02.2023

Signature:

Prof. Dr. Zhaneta Stoykova Dobрева, DSc