

OPINION

on the materials for participation in a competition for the academic position "Assistant Professor", field of higher education 6. Agricultural sciences and veterinary medicine, professional direction 6.2. Plant protection, scientific specialty "Phytopathology", in the discipline "Phytopathology" announced by Forestry University in State Gazette no. 102/8.12.2023, procedure code AsP-1123-119.

Candidates for participation in the competition are: Chief Assistant Zhelyu Georgiev Avramov, PhD.;

The statement was prepared by: PhD. Ivan Dimitrov Kiryakov, Professor of Professional Direction 6.2. Plant protection from Dobrudzha Agricultural Institute, General Toshevo.

1. Brief biographical data about the candidate

Ch. assistant Zhelyu Georgiev Avramov, PhD was born on 26.12.1967 in Asenovgrad. During the period 1987-1992, he was a student at the Higher Agricultural Institute - Plovdiv (AU - Plovdiv), and in 1992 he acquired the "Master's" degree, majoring in "Plant and Soil Protection". From 1993 to 2015, he worked in the Central Plant Quarantine Laboratory, National Plant Protection Service (NPPS), successively as Head. specialist and Head of the "Phytopathology and FSD" department. From 2011 to 2014, he was a doctoral student at the Nikola Pushkarov Institute of Soil Science, Agrotechnology and Plant Protection. In 2014, he obtained a PhD degree after successfully defending his dissertation on the topic: "Phytoplasmic agents of yellows in the grapevine (*Vitis vinifera* L.). Methods of diagnosis". During the period 2015-2017, he was an assistant at the Forestry University - Faculty of Agronomy - Department of "Plant Protection" and since 2017 he has been Head. assistant professor in the same department. Fluent in English and Russian.

2. Compliance of the submitted documents and materials of the candidate with the requirements according to the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at Forestry University.

Only chief assistant Zhelyu Georgiev Avramov, PhD participated in the "associate professor" competition. The candidate has submitted all the required documents laid down in the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the Forestry University, Sofia.

3. Evaluation of the educational and teaching activity of the candidate.

The teaching activity of ch. assistant Zhelyu Avramov, PhD started in 2015 in the Department of "Plant Protection" of Forestry University. From then until now, he has led classes (exercises and lectures) in the Educational qualification degree "Bachelor" in the disciplines "Phytopathology", "General Phytopathology", "Agricultural Phytopathology" and "Prognosis and Signaling", such as the general horary (auditory and outside auditorium occupancy) for the last 5 years amounts to 2313 hours. Outside the classroom activity includes conducting semester exams, supervising 7 successfully defended diplomas and writing one thesis review. The candidate participates in the development of a teaching aid. *Based on the presented reference for the educational and teaching activity, I believe that*

Zhelyu Avramov has the necessary experience as a teacher in the disciplines related to phytopathology.

4. Evaluation of the scientific, applied scientific and publication activity of the candidate.

In the competition for "Assistant Professor", Dr. Avramov presents a list of 36 scientific works, 3 of which are related to the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" and three to the acquisition of the academic position "Chief Assistant". The opinion was prepared based on the presented 30 scientific works, which, according to the minimum requirements laid down in the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, are distributed as follows:

Indicators from group A (Bg - A). A1 – 50 points for the acquisition of the Educational and scientific degree "Doctor";

Indicators from group C (Bg-B). C1 – 100 points related to the publication of a monographic work, if 100 points are required;

Indicators from group D (Bg-I). Total number of points 287.59 out of the required 200 as follows:

Indicator D7 – includes 18 scientific articles, of which 16 are published in journals referred and indexed in Web of Science and 2 in Web of Science and Scopus. Two of the articles were Q3 and the overall IF was 2.33. Total number of points – 241.1;

Indicator D8 – includes 11 publications printed in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes. Total points – 46.49.

Indicators from group E (Bg-I). Total number of points 675 with a required minimum of 50:

Indicator E13. Citations are linked to 8 scientific works of the candidate, which are noted in 35 scientific articles. Total points - 525

Indicator E14. 6 articles were cited in a total of 12 scientific works. Total points 120;

Indicator E15. 5 articles were cited in a total of 5 scientific works. Total points 30.

Indicators from group F (Bg-E). The indicators include the candidate's participation in five national and one international project, as well as the development of one teaching aid. Number of points – 115.

The analysis of the candidate's scientific, scientific-applied and publication activity shows that Dr. Avramov repeatedly exceeds the minimum national requirements for the "Associate Professor" position. The total number of points from the specified indicators amounts to 1227.59 with a required minimum of 400.

4.1. Participation in scientific, scientific-applied and educational projects.

Even though the National Minimum Requirements for holding the academic position "Associate Professor" do not require leadership or participation in research and educational projects, this indicator largely determines the professionalism of the candidates and their ability to work in scientific teams. During the period 2016-2023, Dr. Avramov participated in the implementation of 6 national scientific and educational projects and one international project financed by the Erasmus+ Program.

4.2. Characteristics of published scientific results.

Dr. Avramov's publication activity is related to two main directions of his experimental activity: i) Identification, monitoring and control of viral, phytoplasma and fungal pathogens in field, vegetable, essential oil crops and perennial crops; ii) Comparative testing of lettuce and wellhead genotypes. Twenty-eight of the scientific works, including the monographic work, are directly related to the scientific speciality to which he applied, namely "Phytopathology". Eighteen of the articles were published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in the world database, two of them with Q3, and the cumulative IF reached 2.33. Six of the articles were published in non-refereed journals. In 6 of the publications, the candidate is the sole author, in 10 the first author, in 8 the second author, and in the rest the third or subsequent author. Twenty-three of the articles are in English and the rest are in Bulgarian.

4.3. Reflection of the candidate's scientific activity in the literature (citations).

The submitted publication activity citation report shows that 9 of the candidate's articles were cited in a total of 53 publications by Bulgarian and foreign authors. Of these, 35 citations are related to publications of which the candidate is the lead author. Thirty-five of the publications citing Dr. Avramov were published in journals indexed in the global database. This cited analysis gives me a reason to believe that the scientific and publication activity of Dr. Avramov is recognizable and positively evaluated by the scientific community at home and abroad.

4.4. Contributions in the works of the candidate (scientific, scientific-applied, applied).

I accept the presented report on the contributions, which presents in a systematized form the main contributions in the scientific and publication activity of the candidate. I will allow myself to point out the most important of them.

Scientific contributions of an original nature to our country:

- Identification of the cucumber as a natural host of tomato bronzing (TSWV) and confirmation of the main role of male individuals of *Franclinella occidentalis* as a carrier of the disease (D7.1);
- First announcement in Bulgaria of transmission of ToBRFV in tomato seeds (D7.17);
- Identification of photoplasmas from the stolbura group, which is the first report in our country for cherry (D7.2) and lavender (D7.12);
- For the first time in Bulgaria, an attack on lettuce by *Phylosticta lactucae*, which is new for the country fungal pathogen of this culture, was reported (D8.1).

Scientific and methodological contributions:

- Molecular ((D7.3, D8.5, D8.2, C3.1, D7.5, D7.12, D7.17, D7.19),
- and serological and (C3.1, D7.15) protocols for identification of viral, phytoplasma and bacterial pathogens;
- The presented monographic work (C3.1) includes experimental data on viral, phytoplasma and bacterial pathogens on the vine, the currently existing taxonomy for these groups of pathogens, a description of modern identification methods, as well as

the protocols for their application. I accept this work as a methodical guide in the monitoring of vine diseases.

Scientific-proposal contributions:

The external symptoms of diseases caused by viral, phytoplasma, bacterial and fungal pathogens, their vectors and hosts are described (C3.1, D7.4, D7.7, D7.12, D7.16, D7.18, D8.3).

5. Evaluation of the candidate's contribution.

The personal contribution of the candidate is illustrated by the fact that Dr. Avramov is the sole author of 6 of the scientific articles, and in 10 he is the first author.

6. Critical notes and recommendations.

I have no critical notes or recommendations for the candidate.

7. Personal impressions.

I have known Dr. Avramov since the first years of his work experience, as a phytopathologist at the NPPS. I believe that he is one of the few specialists in the country applying modern methods in the identification of viral, phytoplasma and bacterial pathogens. This is confirmed by the scientific production presented in the current competition.

8. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the pedagogical, scientific and scientific-applied activity of the candidate, I believe that Ch. Assistant Professor Zhelyu Georgiev Avramov, PhD, meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its Implementation and the Regulations for its Implementation of the Forestry University.

The analysis of the presented scientific production, highly appreciated by the scientific community at home and abroad, the rich teaching experience in the professional field of "Plant protection", and the participation in national and international scientific projects give me reason to positively evaluate all her activities.

Based on the above, I SUGGEST the candidate Ch. assistant Dr. ZHELYU GEORGIEV AVRAMOV, PhD for taking up a scientific position "Assistant Professor" in the discipline "Phytopathology" from the Professional direction 6.2.

Prepared the opinion

Prof. Ivan Kuryakov, PhD

The opinion was delivered on: 29.03.2024.