

STANDPOINT

on the materials for participation in the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor", field of higher education 6. "Agrarian Sciences and Veterinary Medicine", PD 6.2. "Plant protection", Scientific specialty "Phytopathology", for the needs of the "Plant protection" Department at the Faculty of Agronomy, announced by decision of the AS of LTU in the State Gazette, no. 102/8.12.2023, with a term of two months and code of the procedure: AGR -AsP-1123-119.

Candidates for participation in the competition is:

- Zhelyu Georgiev Avramov, assistant professor, PhD

Prepared the standpoint:

- Dr. Violeta Savova Kondakova, associate professor of PN 6.2. "Plant protection"

1. Brief biographical data of the candidate/s

At the announced competition for the academic position "Associate Professor" from LTU-Sofia, one candidate appeared - Ch. assistant, Dr. Zhelyu Georgiev Avramov from the Department of "Plant Protection" at the Faculty of Agronomy. The applicant has submitted an impressive CV that demonstrates consistent and thorough scientific research work in the field of plant protection. The candidate has 37 years of experience dedicated to scientific research related to plant pathology. He built his scientific career in three scientific organizations / Institute of Soil Science, Agrotechnics and Plant Protection - Pushkarov; Central Plant Quarantine Laboratory and in the "Plant Protection" department at the Faculty of Agronomy of LTU-Sofia /. Successfully passes all stages of his career development with high quality of his scientific production, which gives him the reason to appear in the announced competition.

2. Conformity of the submitted documents and materials of the candidate/s with the requirements according to the Regulations for LDAC at LTU.

The reference for the Scientometric indicators with which the candidate participated in the competition are presented in comparison with those required according to the Regulations for LDAC at LTU. The comparison shows that Dr. Zhelyu Georgiev Avramov, participated in the competition with scientometric indicators exceeding three times the required ones, or the sum of the points between the indicators is 1227.59 /A+B+D+D+E/, for the required 400 points. The reference has been carefully and accurately prepared, as well as all other documents related to the competition.

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

In the period 2015-2024, Dr. Avramov directs his career to teaching activity, starting a job at LTU, Faculty of Agronomy. Delivers lectures and conducts exercises in the various forms of student education /regular and extramural/. The presented report shows an extremely high activity in teaching and teaching activities. He gives lectures and conducts exercises at EQD "Bachelor" in the specialties "Agronomy" and "Plant Protection" and EQD "Master" in the specialty "Plant Protection". Delivers lectures on the discipline "Legislation in plant protection". His excellent training in the field of plant pathology allows him to conduct exercises in basic agronomic disciplines - General and Agricultural Phytopathology, Forecasts and signaling, Agroecology. From 2022-year Dr. Avramov is a holder of the discipline "Phytopathology" from the "Bachelor's College". The successful teaching activity of Dr. Avramov is largely due to his very good laboratory preparation and mastery of virological and molecular diagnostic methods. The candidate's qualification and rich practical experience in applying different methods for identifying diseases caused by plant pathogens are synchronized with the plant protection law and the EU and European Parliament Regulation. Dr. Avramov engages as a mentor and academic mentor of students and young scientists in the implementation of projects.

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

The number of scientific publications with which Dr. Avramov participated in the competition is 30. This number also includes the Monograph "Virus, Phytoplasma and Bacterial Diseases of the Vine". This is a summarized scientific work including own research and has a lot of up-to-date and useful information on grapevine diseases. An analysis of the phytosanitary status of the vine in Bulgaria is competently made and illustrated with figures, photographs, graphs and a rich bibliographic reference. This 255-page work also includes a comparative analysis of grapevine behavior and pathogens in other regions of the world. The categorically presented monograph will be a valuable aid for students and young researchers.

There are 18 scientific papers published in publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases. In 50% of them, Dr. Avramov is in first place. The object of research includes almost all branches of agriculture of economic importance / viticulture, fruit growing, grain, flower, aromatic and vegetable crops /. Pathogens causing plant diseases were also examined. This breadth in applying different approaches in identifying diseases and defining the phytosanitary status of crops is the most valuable characteristic of the participant in this competition. Another positive assessment is the author's ability to gather teams of specialists to solve a given problem, and also to work successfully in a team. The group of articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals includes 11 publications, of which Dr. Avramov is the first author in 6 of them. Articles that are the result of the participation of more researchers are of high scientific value.

Dr. Avramov's publishing activity is characterized by competence in the selection of journals, both at the national and international level. There are three reports in

international scientific forums, articles in national journals /16/, reports and works in national conferences /2/. Participation in national scientific forums, contact and interaction with specialists working in the field of plant protection from all over the country contributed to the confirmation of Dr. Avramov's authority as a leading scientist.

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

Dr. Avramov has serious experience in preparing the technical specification for laboratory equipment under the PHARE program. He participated in five international and six national projects. Five of the national projects are financed by LTU and one by OP "Science and education for intelligent growth".

A strong impression is made by the efforts of the management of LTU to finance projects that are related to serious problems of agriculture, as well as the development of the scientific potential of LTU and modernization of higher education.

4.2. Characteristics of published scientific results

The published results of Dr. Avramov's scientific activity are characterized by their comprehensiveness. The purpose of the author is not only related to the identification of plant pathogens and their vectors. Research is multidisciplinary and results include visual observations of pathogens and their vectors, classification, epidemiology, diagnostics - immunological, molecular and genetic. The diverse symptomatological picture caused by certain pathogens is considered in the context of considering the influence of geographical latitude, climatic changes, species and varietal diversity. This makes Dr. Avramov's publication activity a valuable source of knowledge with a useful practical orientation.

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

The noted citations of the articles of Dr. Avramov are 53 and are grouped in scientific publications referenced and indexed in a world -famous database /35 numbers/, in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review /12 numbers/ and in non-refereed journals with scientific review /6 numbers/.

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

The contributions of Dr. Avramov's scientific activity are related to the identification and proof of new pathogens and their vectors. For the first time in Bulgaria, the Stolbur phytoplasma was detected on the cherry (*Prunus avium* L.) and a phytoplasma infection was established in the weed convolvulus (*Convolvulus arvensis* L.). In new areas of the country, fungal pathogens of the "Lyulin" raspberry variety - *Phytophthora pseudocryptogea* and fungal pathogens of the lettuce species *Phylosticta lactucae* Brezchnew, and the fungal pathogens *Verticilium*, *Botritis*, *Alternaria* and *Septoria* spp.

A phytoplasma infection was identified on lavender with the causative agent 'Candidatus *Phytoplasma solani*'. New vectors of phytoplasmas in Bulgaria and transmission of Bois Noir in the cicadas *Fiebiriella florii* and *Cicadella viridis* were

established. The species composition and distribution of soil-dwelling fungal pathogens on cereal crops with a fused surface in Bulgaria was studied. Scientific and methodological contributions include development, validation and application of methods for the identification of various plant pathogens, as well as description of the external symptoms of diseases caused by viral, phytoplasma, bacterial and fungal pathogens, their vectors and hosts.

5. Evaluation of the candidate's personal contribution.

Getting acquainted with the research and teaching activities of Dr. Avramov, I remain fully convinced of his personal qualities that contributed to the achievement of significant scientific contributions. He is the lead author in 50% of articles published in IF journals. As a personal contribution to Dr. Avramov's activity, his activity in creating working teams for the urgent solution of crop protection problems in agriculture, as well as his ability to work in teams, can be counted.

6. Critical notes and recommendations

I have no notes and recommendations

7. Personal impressions

I know Dr. Avramov from the time when he worked in the Central Plant Quarantine Laboratory. He was interested in all the problems that were being developed in the laboratory and over time was actively involved in solving them. He very quickly mastered the methods of identifying pathogens - immunological and molecular - which he used routinely in his research. Hardworking, ambitious and with an accurate choice of his career development. A path he walks in the most dignified way. Today, the announced competition for the academic position "Associate professor" is appearing a very well-prepared scientist and teacher.

8. Conclusion

Having familiarized myself with the documents and scientific works presented in the competition and based on the analysis of their significance and the scientific contributions contained in them, I confirm that the scientific achievements meet the requirements of the law and the Regulations for LDAC at LTU.

Based on the above, I suggest the scientific jury to vote positively for the candidate Ch. Ass. Dr. Zhelyu Georgiev Avramov to take the academic position "Ass. Professor" in the discipline "Phytopathology", PD. 6.2. "Plant protection".

Date:
29.03.2024.



Assoc.Prof.Dr. Violeta Savova Kondakova