

ЛЕСОТЕХНИЧЕСКИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ ФАКУЛТЕТ ПО ГОРСКО СТОПАНСТВО
Регистрационен индекс на дата
ФР-5396/03.08.23.

## STATEMENT

on the materials for participation in a competition for acquiring of academic position “Professor” in scientific field 6. Agricultural science and veterinary medicine, in professional direction 6.5. Forestry, scientific specialty “Silviculture, including Dendrology”, subject “Phytocoenology”, announced by University of Forestry in State Gazette № 26/21.03.2023 г., code of the procedure: **FOR-P-0223-102**.

**Applicant to participate in the competition: Dr. Marius Alipiev Dimitrov, Associate Professor**

**Author of the statement: Dr. Evgeni Ivanov Tsavkov, Associate Professor, Department of Dendrology, University of Forestry**

### **1. Short biography of the applicant.**

Assoc. Prof. Marius Dimitrov was born on 20 May 1966. He got secondary education in 1984 in the secondary school for foreign languages in Vratsa. Graduated the Higher Institute for Forestry and Forest Industries (today University of Forestry), subject forestry (specialisation Environmental protection) in 1991 with total marks ‘very good’ and got professional qualification forestry engineer (MSc degree). In 1992 became part-time assistant lecturer on phytocoenology in the department of dendrology at the Faculty of Forestry of the University of Forestry. During the period 1994-2006, gradually passes through the positions assistant, senior assistant (1996) and chief assistant (2000) in the University of Forestry. The subject of his PhD thesis is “Floristic classification of the vegetation in Experimental-and-Training Forest Enterprise “G. S. Avramov” – Yundola”, which he successfully defends in 2004 and becomes a doctor (diploma Nr. 29416/03.01.2005). In 2006 wins the competition for associate professor on phytocoenology (certificate 23734/19.06.2006) and up to now is a titular lecturer on subjects phytocoenology and botany for the students of ecology and environmental protection and landscape architecture. During the period 2007-2016 is vice-dean on education activities of the Faculty of Forestry and since 2016 is a dean of the faculty. Assoc. prof. Dimitrov is a member of the Bulgarian Society of Phytocoenology, Bulgarian Botanical Society, Union of Scientists in Bulgaria, East-Alpine and Dinarian Society for Studying of Vegetation.

### **2. Compliance of the submitted documents and materials of the applicant with those required under the Regulations for Development of Academic Staff at the University of Forestry (RDASUF)**

The candidate has submitted all required documents and materials mentioned in article 60, paragraph 4, incl. according to the requirements of paragraphs 5 and 7 of the Regulations for Development of Academic Staff at the University of Forestry (RDASUF), which was confirmed at the first meeting of the scientific jury and pointed in protocol Nr.1/02.06.2023. In the submitted documents, Assoc. Prof. Marius Dimitrov has presented 39 scientific works, from them 1 book, 13 chapters of collective monographs and 25 scientific publications. The habilitation reference is determined as separate material entitled “Plant communities and natural habitats”. It is 17 pages and includes 10 publications related to the selected topic and published in famous periodical international issues (5 in journals in Web of Science, 5 with IF (B4.4; B4.6; B4.7; B4.8 and B4.9) and 5 in Scopus with SJR). Publications stress on important phytocoenological aspects related to classification and dynamics of vegetation in Bulgaria, as well as actual matters on identification, characteristics and mapping of natural habitats. Of particular attention are candidate’s contributions to classification of important from forestry’s point of view thermophilic oak forests and Austrian black pine forests in Bulgaria.

The subject-matter of the habilitation reference, included articles and determined contributions are in accordance with the competition and I accept them as response to the requirement in index B4, with total points 181,1 (at minimum 100 points) of the minimal national requirements according to article 26 and article 2a, paragraph 1 of RDASUF. The total amount of points, according to parameters in the RDASUF applications for the relevant professional field of the competition, is 3105,56 at a required minimum 550 points.

### **3. Assessment of the applicant's educational activities**

Lecturer's activities of Assoc. Prof. Marius Dimitrov begin in 1992 as part-time assistant on phytocoenology. He has passed through all positions and more than 17 years now is associate professor. He has participated in the educational activities of students from 6 specialties with lectures, practices and field works. He has carried out lectures of two subjects for BSc students – phytocoenology for forestry and ecology and environmental protection (since 2005) and since 2011 – botany for ecology and environmental protection. Since 2011, Assoc. Prof. Marius Dimitrov is also a lecturer on phytocoenology (optional subject) and botany for the MSc students in landscape architecture. During the period 2010-2022 he is a mentor of four graduates from the Faculty of Forestry (2 BSc and 2 MSc) and two PhD students – one (together with Prof. Rosen Tsonev) defended his PhD thesis in the Republic of North Macedonia and the other one is on the final stage. He has been a consultant of one PhD student. Assoc. Prof. Marius Dimitrov is an author of two university textbooks – botany and phytocoenology, as well as of one manual for practical exercises in botany.

In his lecturer's activity Assoc. Prof. Marius Dimitrov has always been very accurate and exact and the material is in accordance with contemporary trends in the relevant field and on high academic level.

### **4. Assessment of the applicant's scientific, applied and publication activities**

#### **4.1. Participation in scientific, applied science, infrastructure and educational projects**

The candidate's research activities can be followed through his participation in research and scientific-and-applicable projects. During the period 2008-2021, Assoc. Prof. Marius Dimitrov has participated in 4 national and 2 international projects.

He has taken part in total 14 contracts with various organisations – the Executive Forest Agency, Proles Engineering Ltd., Bulgarian Foundation Biodiversity, Association of Parks in Bulgaria, etc.

#### **4.2. Characteristics of published scientific results**

Publication activity of Assoc. prof. Marius Dimitrov is in accordance to the scientific field and subject. He participates in the competition with 39 published materials, from them 25 scientific publications, 1 book and 13 chapters of collective monographs, as follows:

- Habilitation reference – 10 scientific publications in issues, which are referred and indexed in world-famous data base with scientific information. These articles could be grouped according to contributions in 3 basic directions: 1/ vegetation classification (B4.1, B4.4; B4.5-4.9), 2/ dynamics of vegetation (B4.10), 3/ identification, characteristics and mapping of natural habitats (B4.2, B4.3). Five of the articles are in journals with IF (B4.5–B4.9), and other 5 are in issues referred and indexed in world data bases (Web of Science and Scopus).
- Other scientific publications – 15, from which:
  - o in scientific journals – 4 in issues, referred and indexed in world data bases – Г7.1–Г7.4;
  - o non-referred journals with scientific reviewing or published in reviewed collective volumes – 11 (4 reports in proceedings from scientific forums – Г8.2–Г8.5, 7 articles in journals – Г8.1, Г8.6-8.11);

- published chapters of collective monographs – 13 (Г11.1–Г11.13).

Publications in foreign language predominate – 29 (74%). Three of the publications are self-written, 13 – with one, 7 – with two and 16 – with more co-authors. From the mutual publications, M. Dimitrov is a leading author in 15 of them.

Additional information is presented about co-authorship of 2 books, 1 guide and 4 manuals. Six popular science articles are also presented.

All this gives me the reason to conclude that Assoc. prof. Marius Dimitrov is one of the competent researchers working in the field of floristic, plant and habitat diversity in Bulgaria. His scientific creative work covers various directions in the field of phytocoenology, most of the works are in foreign language and referred in leading scientific issues and forums. This is also proved by the numerous citations, which gives me the reason to consider that Assoc. Prof. Dimitrov is well-presented and appreciated by specialists with floristic and phytocoenological competences both in Bulgaria and abroad.

#### **4.3. Reflection of the applicant's scientific activity in the literature (citations)**

The candidate has presented citations of 13 of his publications – predominantly of articles in journals, which are referred and indexed in world-famous data bases with scientific information. The presented list shows total 208 citations. From them, 138 are in scientific journals, 9 – in monographs and scientific works and 61 – in non-referred journals with scientific reviewing.

Along with the high number of citations, indication for the competence of Assoc. prof. Marius Dimitrov in the field of phytocoenology are the seven reviews of manuscripts for two scientific journals – Forestry Ideas and Silva Balcanica.

#### **4.4. Contributions in the applicant's work (scientific, applied)**

Contributions in the scientific publications of Assoc. Prof. Marius Dimitrov are summarized in 3 directions – flora and vegetation, natural habitats and education and science. I accept them, their determination and classification are adequate and show very well the candidate's activities. The predominance of the scientific ones (total 15) is natural, having in mind the character of themes about flora and vegetation, which are basic for the sustainable and close-to-nature management of forests.

I would outline as significant the following achievements: classification scheme of plant communities in Bulgaria has been done – 39 classes, 67 orders, 94 alliances, 218 associations and 48 subassociations (publications B4.1). Some forest phytocoenosis types are classified – natural Austrian black pine forests, thermophilic oak forests, Macedonian pine forests in North Macedonia (B4.5-4-9; Г7.4; Г8.7; Г11.1); the syntaxonomy of horse chestnut forests on the Balkan peninsula was determined (Г7.4); classification scheme of grass communities in Bulgaria and in Vitosha nature park was done (B4.1; Г8.6)

I highly assess the wide geographical range of investigations – Vitosha Mt. (Г8.6), the Rhodopes (B4.5; Г8.1), Ponor Mt. (B4.2), Besaparski hills (B4.3), Slivenska Mt. (B4.7; B4.10), Central Balkan Range (incl. Central Balkan national park) (B4.8; Г8.7 and Г8.8)), as well as outside Bulgaria – Republic of North Macedonia (incl. Kozhuh Mt.) (B4.8 and Г8.8), etc. I consider important and valuable the publications with general overview on Bulgaria's vegetation (Г11.13). The investigations cover areas from the sea level (flooded, riparian and longozes forests) up to the high-mountain zone (Г8.1; Г8.6, Г8.7). This wide range of investigations by Assoc. prof. Marius Dimitrov shows his profound analytical vision on plant communities in Bulgaria. I found all this a good testimonial of a well-qualified lecturer and significant researcher of the vegetation cover in Bulgaria.

### **5. Assessment of the applicant's personal contribution.**

The candidate has 3 self-written publications and 17 with one co-author. The applicant's personal contribution is clear, which is a result from his expert knowledge and skills. As a colleague of Assoc. prof. Marius Dimitrov, as well as from the few mutual publications, I can assert that he possesses connexicy and thoroughness in data analysis and results. I claim that the contribution in the mutual publications is equal to the personal one. I highly assess the applicant's research activity, his profound knowledge, interest and active work in the field of phytocoenology.

## **6. Critical remarks and recommendations.**

I didn't find any significant omissions in the presented materials. I would only specify that, according to the applied document is „undergoing review process“, which is not equal to “accepted for publication”.

As a leading specialist in the field of phytocoenology, and having in mind the capacity of Assoc. prof. Marius Dimitrov as a good florist, I would recommend more adapted and practically-orientated representation of the difficult matter on classification of syntaxa to the forestry staff. In this relation, the increasing of the number of popular science publications would contribute to this. All this would make phytocoenology a good basis for actualisation of the forest typology in our country and its “equalisation” to these ones in other European countries.

Having in mind the qualities of Assoc. Prof. Marius Dimitrov as a good pedagogue and long-standing lecturer on phytocoenology, I think that the purposeful activity on training of assistants, MSc and PhD students in this difficult field of the forest science is not only recommendable but obligatory, as well.

I am sure that in the future Assoc. Prof. Marius Dimitrov will continue with summarising of obtained results and in his future research activities he will have, if not single-handed, at least leading position. The experimental material and consistent and thorough attitude of Assoc. Prof. Marius Dimitrov to the flora and vegetation of Bulgaria will result in many new publications in journals with IF.

## **7. Personal impressions**

I know Assoc. Prof. Marius Dimitrov since 1996 as lecturers in the department of dendrology and I have positive impressions as a colleague and lecturer. I have asked him many times for advises, having in mind the common matters in the subjects we teach – botany, phytocoenology and dendrology. Lately, the opportunity for profound discussions is bigger thank to our mutual field work with students in forestry, which I lead. Our mutual work on various projects in various regions of Bulgaria makes the impression that Assoc. Prof. Marius Dimitrov is a good expert in the Bulgarian flora and vegetation. His good, consequent and solid methodological knowledge gives him the opportunity and conviction in research activities and taking decisions in practical matters in forestry. As a dean of the Faculty of Forestry he represents the leading role of this structure in the University of Forestry. Here I would add the applicant's participation in various media, which makes our university more popular. Assoc. Prof. Marius Dimitrov is respected by his colleagues – lecturers and students. He is a member of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Forestry, the Academic Council of the University of Forestry and takes part in various commissions and scientific juries. He is a member of the editorial boards of two journals – *Forestry Ideas* and *Šumarski pregled*. He is an active participant in the organisation and carrying out of lecturer's and research activities, conferences and other forums and events of the University of Forestry.

Besides scientific and lecturer activities, I would mention that Assoc. Prof. Marius Dimitrov has interest and achievements in the field of sport – football. He is also asked for expert and consultant activities by other organisations (Executive Forest Agency; Regional Forestry Board; State Forest/Game Management Enterprise; Institute of Biodiversity and

Ecosystem Investigations – BAS; Proles Engineering Ltd.; Asarel-Medet JSC; Povvik JSC; Bulgarian Foundation Biodiversity; Eco-Les Belasitsa Consortium, etc.).

### 8. Conclusion

On the basis of all above-mentioned, as well as the complex assessment of candidate's qualities, his scientific activities and on the basis of my personal impressions, I would conclude that Assoc. Prof. Marius Dimitrov fits the requirements of the Regulations for Development of Academic Staff at the University of Forestry (RDASUF) for the academic rank professor and, in many cases, he even significantly exceeds them. This gives me the reason to RECOMMEND Assoc. Prof. Dr. Marius Dimitrov to acquire the academic rank professor on the subject phytocoenology in professional field 6.5. Forestry.

**Date:** 01.08.2023  
**Sofia**

**Author of the statement ..** .....  
(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Evgeni Ivanov Tsavkov)

**The Statement was submitted on:** 03.08.2023