



## STATEMENT

on the materials for participation in a competition for acquiring of academic position “Professor” in scientific field 6. “Agricultural sciences 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 of Mart 7, 2023, code of the procedure: FOR-P-0223-102.

### **Applicant to participate in the competition:**

1. Assoc. prof. Dr. Marius Alipiev Dimitrov.

**Author of the statement:** Assoc. prof. Dr. Svetoslav Mladenov Anev, professional direction 6.5. Forestry, scientific specialty “Silviculture, including Dendrology”, Department of Dendrology, University of Forestry

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

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Marius Alipiev Dimitrov completed his higher education at the University of Forestry in 1991, majoring in “Forestry”, specializing in “Protection of the Natural Environment”. In 2004, he defended his thesis for his Ph.D. on the topic “Floristic classification of the vegetation of the territory of the National Forest Service “G. Avramov”. From 1994 to 1996, he worked at the University of Forestry as an assistant, from 1996 to 2000 as a senior assistant, from 2000 to 2006 as a major assistant, and from 2006 as an associate professor in the discipline “Phytocenology”. From 2007 to 2016, he was the deputy dean for academic activities in the Faculty of Forestry, and from 2016 to the present, he is the dean of the same faculty.

### **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**

The documents and materials submitted for the competition are in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its application. They also correspond to the internal Regulations for Development of Academic Staff at the University of Forestry from 2019.

From the publications presented in the applicant's self-assessment reference, I believe that publications D8.4, D8.10, and D8.11, as well as the chapter of the collective monograph D11.12, do not relate to the scientific specialty of the competition, and I do not accept them in connection with the present procedure. With the reduction of 5.41 points from the specified publications and 6.66 points from the specified chapter of the monograph, I accept according to indicator D8 – 31.47 points, according to indicator D11 – 111.64 according to indicator D – a total of 217.8 points and according to the competition total – 3093.49 points, which significantly exceeds the required 550 points.

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

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Marius Alipiev Dimitrov teaches “Phytocoenology” and “Botany” with more than 28.5 years of experience. He has passed through all levels of the teaching hierarchy - from assistant to titular. At all levels of teaching, Dr. Dimitrov actively participates in developing and updating curricula in the disciplines he leads. He brings out teaching practices in botany and phytocoenology with students from different specialties. From 2010 to 2023, Associate Professor Dimitrov supervised four diploma theses developed by three graduate students. He participated in the supervision of two successfully defended Ph.D. students.

Dr. Dimitrov actively participates in the updates of the curricula for the “Forestry” specialty - “bachelor” and “master”. As a representative of the dean’s leadership, Dr. Dimitrov has participated in competitive exams for Ph.D. students, assistants, and senior assistants, as well as in exams from the Ph.D. students' plans, the subject of which is related to the disciplines “Botany” and/or “Phytocoenology”.

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

General description of the presented materials

Dr. Marius Dimitrov participated in the competition with:

B4. Habilitation Work - scientific publications (no less than 10) in scientific journals, that have been peer-reviewed and indexed in world-renown databases of scientific information – 10

Г6. A published book based on a defended dissertation for the award of Ph.D.

Г7. Publications that have been peer-reviewed and indexed in world-renown databases of scientific information – 4 (1 in press).

Г8. Publications in specialized science journals that are not referenced and indexed in world-renown data bases with scientific information – 11 (8).

Г11. A published chapter in a collective monograph – 13.

Д13. Citations or Reviews in science journals, referenced and indexed in world-renown databases with science information or monographs and collective volumes – 138.

Д14. Citations in monographs and collective volumes with peer-review – 9.

Д15. Citations or Reviews in non-referenced journals with peer-review – 61.

E17. Supervision of a successfully defended Ph.D. students – 2.

E18. Participation in a national scientific or educational project – 4.

E19. Participation in an international scientific or educational project – 2.

E22. Published university textbook – 2.

E23. Published university handbook – 1.

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

Assoc. Prof. Dimitrov has submitted documents for participation in four national and two international scientific projects. The 14 contracts and six references for scientific and applied expert activity attached to the papers prove beyond doubt that Dr. Dimitrov is an expert sought by the forest and ecology practice, in whose person science at the University of Forestry has excellent popularizer.

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

B4. The ten scientific publications presented in the competition, in journals referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information, fully correspond to the competition's theme. Four are in journals with a Web of Science impact-factor (total IF = 4.125), and nine are in journals with a Scimago Journal & Country Rank (total SJR = 2.679).

Г6. The book, based on the Ph.D. thesis, promotes the results of the candidate's research on the floristic classification of vegetation in the Yundola region.

Г7. Of the articles in scientific publications referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information, three have been published, and one is under review.

Г8. Of the publications in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes, four are in Bulgarian (three in scientific conference proceedings and one journal article), and four are in English, all in scientific journals.

Г11. The published chapters of monographs are divided into three groups:

1. Chapters in the Red Book of the Republic of Bulgaria, Vol. 3 Natural habitats - nine issues, four of which Dr. Dimitrov is the first author, and in the other five, he is a co-author.

2. Chapters in the collective monograph “Bioproductivity of beech forests (influence of

anthropogenic and biotic factors) - two issues, of which Dr. Dimitrov is the first author.

3. Chapter in the collective monograph (in press) "Geography of Bulgaria" - Dr. Dimitrov is a co-author.

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

In the documents presented by Assoc. Prof. Marius Dimitrov, a list with five scientific publications, cited in 138 scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information or in monographs and collective volumes is attached; four - cited in monographs and collective books with scientific review and five - cited in non-refereed journals with scientific review, which in total bring the candidate 2465 points.

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

Dr. Dimitrov has rich scientific work in the field of phytocoenology. His contributions can be divided into the following areas:

1. Scientific and applied contributions in the field of floristic studies and the classification, characterization, dynamics, and bio-productivity of vegetation - his work is mainly in the region of the Slivenska and Vitosha mountains.

It establishes the floristic diversity of Slivenska Planina and categorizes its flora as elementary. He studied 84 complexes dominated by peat mosses in the Vitosha Natural Park. He is the co-author of a classification scheme of plant communities in Bulgaria. Makes a classification of forest phytocoenoses. Classification and ordination of thermophilic oak forests in Bulgaria. Contributes to preparing indicative maps for the distribution of syntaxons in Bulgaria. Classifies the forest vegetation in Slivenska Planina. It contributes to establishing a connection between the soils developed on a different rock base and the *Pinus peuce* forests on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia. It presents a taxonomic scheme of forest communities for the National Park "Centralna Stara Planina". It has contributed to establishing the syntaxonomy of the Balkan Peninsula horse chestnut forests. It proves that the communities have a natural relic character. Researches subalpine coniferous forests and associated birch forests in the National Park "Centralna Stara Planina". Establishes associations of beech forests in Stara Planina and determines bio-productivity in them. Experienced in the preparation of classifications of shrub and grass communities in Bulgaria. Participated in creating a Balkan plant database covering the territory of 9 countries. Establishes relationships between forest plant communities and natural habitat types.

It studies the dynamics of different types of plant communities. Analyzes the impact of grazing on the composition and condition of mountain pastures. It finds that the inaccurate assessment of grazing potential leads to the degradation of grassland communities. Establishes the formation of shrub communities after the cessation of traditional activity in the pastures. He traced succession processes in forest phytocenosis. Recommends monitoring of vegetation dynamics and prevent degradation processes. It assessed the productivity of beech forests, the role of environmental factors, and the contribution of individual social classes in the carbon balance of forests.

2. Scientific and applied contributions to the identification, characterization, and mapping of natural habitats.

Develops and applies methods and models for determining and mapping natural habitats. Combines remote sensing methods with the Braun-Blanquet method for vegetation mapping and classification. Analyzes the spread and dynamics of forest vegetation over hundred years for the National Park "Centralna Stara Planina". In connection with structuring the Red Book of the Republic of Bulgaria, he develops a method for determining habitats using data from the forest inventory. Develops an original IUCN-based method for habitat threat assessment. Summarizes information on 17 forest and six grassland habitats. Makes recommendations on the nature conservation status of habitats.

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

The candidate's contribution is indisputable - with his expert knowledge and skills, Dr. Dimitrov often drives scientific observations and experiments and their description in scientific journals. From the joint monograph, in which we are authors in different chapters, I think Dr. Dimitrov has a leading role at all stages of creating scientific work.

## 6. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no critical remarks on the candidate's scientific works. I recommend Dr. Dimitrov keep his Web of Science, ORCID, Scopus, ResearchGate, Google Scholar, and BPOS accounts up to date.

## 7. Personal impressions

Even from the student bench, I have assessed the candidate's teaching work as excellent. Dr. Dimitrov is a teacher, scientist, and colleague with erudition and a modern point of view not only on phytocenology and botany but also on a broader aspect of plant ecology and forestry. He is extremely precise in his professional speech and shows an ethical attitude and tolerance towards students and colleagues.

## 8. Conclusion

Based on the submitted materials and documents, I strongly **suggest** that the candidate, **Associate Professor Dr. Marius Alipiev Dimitrov**, take the academic position of "Professor" in the discipline "Phytocenology" from professional direction 6.5. Forestry.

Author of the statement:

/Assoc. Prof. Dr. Svetoslav Anev/

The Statement was submitted on: 01.08.2023