Standpoint

by Prof. Ivan Dinev Ivanov, Department of General and Clinical Pathology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Thrakia University, Stara Zagora

Member of the Scientific Jury based on Order №ЗПС-42/27.01.2023 of the Rector of University of Forestry, Sofia, regarding participation in:

Contest for occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor" in scientific specialty "Epizootology, Infectious Diseases and Prevention of Infectious Diseases in Animals", from the Department of "Infectious pathology, hygiene, technology and control of food of animal origin" of University of Forestry", higher education 6. Agricultural sciences and veterinary medicine, professional field 6.4. Veterinary medicine, published in the State Gazette, issue 100 от 16.12.2022 and procedure code:VM-AsP-1222-96.

The candidate in the announced competition is Ch. assistant professor Dr. Georgi Malinov Stoimenov from the Department of "Infectious Pathology, Hygiene, Technology and Control of Foods of Animal Origin" at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Forestry, Sofia.

• **Brief biographical data.** Georgi Malinov Stoimenov was born on April 29, 1986 in the city of Sofia. He received his higher education in 2011 at Forestry University, Sofia, specialty Veterinary Medicine. After successfully passing the competitive exam in 2013, Dr. Stoimenov began working as a full-time assistant in the Department of "Infectious Pathology, Hygiene, Technology and Control of Foods of Animal Origin", at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the Forestry University, Sofia.

After 2017, until now, his professional development continues as the Chief Assistant in the same department. In 2014, he was enrolled in a doctoral course of independent training in

the doctoral program "Epizootology, infectious diseases and prevention of infectious diseases in animals", professional direction "Veterinary Medicine". In 2017, he successfully defended his dissertation on the topic "Studies on influenza A viruses in wild birds in Bulgaria" and received the science degree "Doctor". The biographical reference of Dr. Stoimenov is supplemented by courses for additional training in specialized English with qualification level B2 and previous practice as a veterinarian related to examinations, diagnosis and treatment of small animals in a veterinary clinic, as well as surgical interventions on laboratory animals used in scientific research projects at EIMPAM - BAS.

• **Description of the materials for the competition**. According to the rules for the development of the academic staff of the University of Forestry, Sofia, the documents and materials I received for the preparation of an opinion fully correspond to the requirements.

Dr. Stoimenov submits for participation in the announced competition a list and copies of materials certifying the existence of a total of 22 scientific publications. In addition, he is the author of a dissertation work and 3 related scientific publications, as well as authorship in publishing teaching aids, monographs and books. The latter include a published book based on a protected dissertation work, a monograph and an e-course for students of veterinary medicine based on the Blackboard Learn™, http://elearn.ltu.bg/ of the Forest Technical University. Of course, all the normative documents according to the requirements are also attached to the set of materials (diplomas for completed higher education, for a scientific degree, information on pedagogical and academic teaching activities, etc.).

• **General description of the applicant's activity.**

Research activity. The scientific publications presented by the candidate for participation in the competition are the result of his creative activity during the period 2013-2022. The majority of them (n=14) were published in scientific journals. Of them in refereed and indexed editions in world-renowned scientific information databases (Scopus, Web of Science) with an impact factor or impact rank – 7 (№№1-7); referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information (Scopus, Web of Science) without impact factor or impact rank - 7 (№№8-14); scientific publications in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes in English – 4 (№№15-18); Scientific publications in non-refereed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes in Bulgarian - 4 (№№19-22).

The main scientific contributions resulting from the publications submitted for participation in the competition related to Dr. Stoimenov's research work are in the field of infectious pathology in birds (№№1-10). For the first time in Bulgaria, HPAIV H5N1 was isolated and analyzed in curled pelicans. The clinical symptoms and histopathological changes in this species of bird during natural infection with the virus (№ 5) were studied.

The first outbreak of HPAI H5N1 in poultry in Bulgaria is described. Isolated, subtyped and pathotyped using classical and molecular biological methods was HPAIV H5N1. Clinical signs and histopathological changes following virus infection in domestic hens were studied. A phylogenetic analysis was also carried out in order to establish the way of movement and entry of the virus in Bulgaria and specifically in the affected farm (№6).

An outbreak analysis of HPAI H5N1 in curled pelicans in the Srebarna Biosphere Reserve was performed. The isolated viruses were sequenced, a phylogenetic analysis was performed, in which the closeness of the subtype with the viruses isolated in Bulgaria and Romania in the same year (№ 9) was confirmed.

An analysis of the recent outbreaks of Newcastle disease in birds in Bulgaria was made. With the help of molecular epidemiology, an analysis was made of the ways of entry and movement of the virus in Bulgaria through migrating wild birds (№2).

Clinical signs, pathohistological changes and distribution of viral antigen in different tissues and organs were studied by immunohistochemistry, in natural infection with HPAI H5N8 in pheasants. The possible ways for the infection to enter the country and the role of hunting farms for wild birds in the spread of this highly pathogenic virus (№3) are also analyzed.

The clinical signs and pathohistological changes of natural infection with HPAI H5N8 in different age groups of Muller ducks were studied. The role of this bird species as a reservoir of infection and the importance of improving biosecurity measures in mallard duck farms (№ 4) have been confirmed.

Another group of publications with which Dr. Stoimenov applied for habilitation as associate professor is in the field of infectious pathology in small ruminants (№№ 11-14). Hematological changes in lactating goats with subclinical mastitis were investigated. An analysis of diagnostic methods for the detection of subclinical mastitis in goats has been carried out (№№15, 17).

Studies have been made of the curative and prophylactic effect of antibiotic therapy during the dry period in goats, using a selective and non-selective approach of antibiotic administration. Application of both treatment approaches has been found to reduce the

prevalence and incidence of mastitis in goats, as well as a reduction in somatic cells after parturition (№10).

The microbiological status of the mammary gland in lactating Lacon sheep was studied. *S. xylosus* was found most often, in most cases in combination with the non-pathogenic streptococcus *Lactococcus lactis* ssp. lactis. The sensitivity of the bacteria isolated from the milk samples to antibiotics from different groups was also determined (№12).

In separate studies, the results are related to contributions in the field of infectious pathology in pigs (№18); in the field of vector-borne infections in Bulgaria (№13); study of the carcinogenic influence of various toxic substances (№№17 and 18) and contributions related to infectious pathology in rabbits (№№21 and 22) and amplification of DNA fragments from helminths (№19).

• ***Teaching and learning activity.*** Dr. Stoimenov's direct duties are related to preparation of the educational process, conducting exercises and lectures in the disciplines of Virology, Epidemiology and preventive veterinary medicine, Infectious diseases, Diseases of bees, fish and game in Bulgarian and English. An e-learning course on Infectious Diseases (Animal Diseases for Company) has been developed. It reflects the most necessary theoretical and practical knowledge of infectious animal diseases for a company. Attention has been paid to the basic principles in the setting of non-laboratory (epidemiological features, clinical signs, patho-anatomical changes) and laboratory diagnostics of infectious diseases in animals for company (25).

• **Reflection of the candidate's scientific works in the literature**. From the presented references for scientometric indicators, it is clear that from publication activity the candidate received a total impact factor of 3.324 and an impact rank of 1.864 from 12 scientific papers, the majority of which were published in international publications. In 4 of the publications in connection with the competition, he is an independent author, and in the rest he is in a collective with one or more co-authors. Dr. Stoimenov presents a list of a total of 21 citations from 11 of his scientific works, of which in journals with an impact factor: 7; with impact rank: 3; international journals without IF: 9 and in monographs: 2.

• **Some notes.** Considering the field in which Dr. Stoimenov works, and especially the challenges of our daily life in relation to it, as well as the conditions of the working environment to date, which give promising opportunities and from which interesting scientific developments can arise, I would only allow myself to wishes for creative enthusiasm and achieving new and greater successes.

• **Personal impressions.** Given the professional relations of the candidate in our joint development, as well as from the references presented in connection with the required indicators for participation in a competition for occupying an academic position, I could conclude that they characterize a disciplined and responsible colleague.

• **Conclusion.** Analyzing the scientific-research and teaching activity on the basis of presented scientific productivity, references for reflection of contributions from publication activity and academic employment of the candidate, I consider that they fully meet the requirements of the law on the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the rules for its application and the criteria of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Forestry, Sofia for acquiring the relevant position under this competition.

In this regard, I propose to the respected members of the scientific jury to join my opinion on the formation of a proposal in front of the Faculty Council regarding the awarding of the academic title "Associate Professor" in "Epizootology, infectious diseases and prevention of infectious diseases in animals" to Ch. assistant professor Dr. Georgi Malinov Stoimenov from the Department of "Infectious Pathology, Hygiene, Technology and Control of Foods of Animal Origin" at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the Forestry University, Sofia.

March 24, 2023

prof. I. Dinev: