



OPINION

on the materials for participation in the competition for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor", field of higher education 4. Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics, NS 4.4 Earth sciences, academic specialty "Ecology and Ecosystems Protection" for the discipline "Ecology", announced by University of Forestry in State Gazette, issue 4/15.1.2021, code of procedure ELA-AsP-0121-52.

The candidates for participation in the competition are:

1. Ralitsa Todorova Kuzmanova

Opinion prepared by: Professor Violina Angelova Rizova, PhD, Professor of Natural sciences 4.4 Earth sciences from Agricultural University- Plovdiv

1. Brief biographical information about the candidate

Chief assistant Ralitsa Kuzmanova, PhD was born in 1974 in the town of Ruse. She acquired the academic degree "Master" in the specialty „Ecology, protection and restoration of the environment“ in the University of Forestry, Sofia in 1997. In 1997 she acquired the professional qualification "Teacher" in the specialty "Engineering pedagogy" at the same university. She acquired the academic and science degree (ASD) doctor in 2015 in the University of Forestry, Sofia in the specialty „Ecology and protection of ecosystems“. The topic of her dissertation is „Phytophenological studies of beech ecosystem in the stationary "Vitinya"“. From 1998 to 1999, she worked as a secretary and associate at independent association "Ekoglasnost" Sofia. Since 1999 until the present moment she has been working at the University of Forestry – Sofia. See is the titular of the discipline "Ecology" at the Department of "Ecology, Protection and Restoration of the Environment" of the University of Forestry - Sofia.

The professional development of the candidate Dr. Ralitsa Kuzmanova is related with increase of qualification, participation in courses and trainings in Web technologies, for work and support of e-learning platform Blackboard LearnTM, for preparation, participation and management of scientific projects, work with Free Open Source GIS software, with SPSS and others.

She knows English and Russian.

2. Relevance of the submitted documents and materials of the candidate/s with the required ones according to the rules of Academic staff development in the University of Forestry;

The documents presented by chief assistant Ralitsa Kuzmanova, PhD fully correspond in type and content to the regulatory requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act of the Republic of Bulgaria and to the Rules on its application, as well as to the specific requirements for occupying academic positions pursuant to the Rules of academic staff development in the University of Forestry. The verification- self evaluation for fulfilment of

the minimum national requirements pursuant to Article 2a and Article 60, paragraph 4, section 8 of the Rules of academic staff development in the University of Forestry contains correctly filled information of the scientific and the scientific- applied work of the candidate which exceeds the compulsory for the academic position indexes (group of indicators "A" - 50 points, group of indicators "B" - 100 points, group of indicators "G" – 357.2 points, group of indicators "D" - 80 points). The candidate participates in the competition with 587.2 points.

3. Evaluation of the scientific and teaching work of the candidate

Ralitsa Kuzmanova, PhD has been a chief assistant in the department of “Ecology, protection and restoration of the environment” with the faculty of “Ecology and landscape architecture” of the University of Forestry. She is a titular of 2 disciplines – in academic degree “Bachelor” - "Ecology" and 1 for the Master's degree - module "Ecological Network" to the discipline "Conservation of Biodiversity and Ecological Network". She conducts lectures and exercises in the discipline "Ecology and Environmental Protection" with students majoring in "Forestry" at the Bachelor's Degree. Chief assistant Ralitsa Kuzmanova, PhD is a supervisor of 1 diploma theses and reviewer of 2 diploma theses.

Chief Assistant Dr. Ralitsa Kuzmanova has participated as a co-author in the updating of 2 syllabuses "Ecology" and "Conservation of Biodiversity and Ecological Network".

The presented materials of chief assistant Ralitsa Kuzmanova, PhD, for teaching and pedagogical activity, gives reason to conclude that they are in accordance with the accepted scientometric requirements for occupying the academic position in the "Associate Professor" at the University of Forestry- Sofia.

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

4.1. Participation in scientific, scientific applied and education projects

Chief assistant Ralitsa Kuzmanova, PhD has participated in 7 scientific and applied projects in the field of competition carried out with the University of Forestry (of which he is the leader of 3 projects), 1 in international cooperative activities - Forests "Assessment and monitoring of the impact of pollution air on forest ecosystems"- Level I (Large-scale) and Level II (Intensive) and 1 infrastructure project “Construction of a scientific laboratory in Ecology”.

Chief assistant Ralitsa Kuzmanova, PhD has participated in 2 educational projects under the Operational Program "Human Resources Development" project № BG051PO001-3.3.07-0002 "Student Internships" and Operational Program "Science and Education for Smart Growth" project № BG05M2OP001- 2.002-0001 "Student internships - phase 1" as an academic mentor to 10 students.

4.2. Characteristic of the published scientific results

For the purpose of the present competition for occupying the academic position of Associate professor, Chief assistant Ralitsa Kuzmanova, PhD has presented a list of 19 published research works (not including the ones for her PhD dissertation, which are presented in the List of

publications, inventions and scientific-applied results), from which:

- 1 reviewed monograph (V3);
- 8 articles, published in scientific editions, referenced and indexed in world known databases (G7);
- 10 articles and reports, published in non-referred scientific editions with scientific review (G8)

The presented scientific production exceeds in qualitative and quantitative aspect the minimum national requirements under the Academic Staff Development Act, the rules on its implementation and the Rules on the development of the academic staff of the University of Forestry.

From the scientific publications, 8 are independent, 10 are in joint authorship in 3 of them the candidate is in the first place from the group of authors, in 4 of them he is in the second place and in 3 of them she is in third and succeeding places. Nine of the publications are published in English language and 9 in Bulgarian language. Chief assistant Ralitsa Kuzmanova, PhD has participated in 14 scientific forums in Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey.

Her monography work is with topic: „Phenological studies of common beech *Fagus sylvatica* L.“, ISBN 978-619- 91033-2-6, issued by publishing house „Sejani EOOD“ and corresponds to the requirements for monograph.

4.3. Impact from the scientific work of the candidate in literature (Quoted publications)

The appraisals of the acknowledgement of the candidate in the scientific environment are the quotations, denoted in the competition documents. According to the reference presented by the candidate 12 quotations in scientific editions are noticed, referenced and indexed in world known databases with scientific information (D10), 6 quotations in monographs and group volumes with scientific review (D11) and 1 quotations in non-referenced editions with scientific review (D12).

This information gives me the reason to conclude that the candidate is a recognized author in the scientific environment, having published in significant scientific magazines in the field of the competition. Pursuant to the minimum national requirements for occupying the position of Associate Professor in the University of Forestry, the presented information is completely sufficient and prove good level of impact of the scientific production of chief assistant Ralitsa Kuzmanova, PhD over the research work of Bulgarian and foreign authors.

4.4. Contribution in the research work of the candidate (scientific, scientific-applied, applied)

I accept the presented by the candidate authors' reference with the scientific and scientific-applied contributions.

The more important scientific and applied scientific contributions to the scientific works are related to observations on the development and duration of the main life processes in the phenological development of common beech; application of phenological models for predicting the development of common beech; studies on the content of some more important macro- and microelements in the leaves/conifers of tree species, necessary for their normal growth and development; assessment of the condition and the change in the mineral nutrition and accumulation of toxic substances from the soil and air in the leaves of the observed tree species; assessment of the representativeness of the landscapes and the types of natural habitats from the ecological network Natura 2000 in the sample areas for large-scale monitoring of the forest ecosystems; assessment of the status and projected anthropogenic impacts on landscapes, ecosystems and protected areas under the Habitats Directive; assessment of opportunities for restoration of disturbed terrains through biological reclamation and assessment of ecosystem services in

reclaimed terrains.

5. Evaluation of the personal contribution of the candidate

I consider the contributions of the candidate Ralitsa Kuzmanova, PhD as her personal work and that they are sufficient and completely corresponding the topic of the competition. The achieved scientific results are of high scientific and scientific- applied value.

I believe that the qualitative and quantitative indicators and criteria for occupation the academic position of "Associate Professor" are met in accordance with the minimum national requirements for the relevant field of higher education and the requirements set in the Rules on development of academic staff in the University of Forestry.

6. Critical notes and recommendations

There are no critical notes regarding the candidate's work.

I recommend that Ralitsa Kuzmanova, PhD increases publication activity in recognized foreign scientific journals so that her research works find wider acknowledgement.

7. Personal impressions

I have no personal impressions from the candidate's work and my evaluation is based entirely on the presented materials.

8. Conclusion

On the basis of the conducted analysis of the scientific, scientific- applied and pedagogical work I SUGGEST the candidate CHIEF ASSISTANT RALITSA TODOROVA KUZMANOVA, PH.D. to occupy the academic position "Associate Professor" in the discipline "Ecology" in NS 4.4 Earth sciences.

Opinion, prepared by:
/Prof. V. Rizova, PhD/

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