

STATEMENT

on the materials for participation in a competition for occupation of academic position "Associate Professor" in scientific field 6. Agricultural sciences and veterinary medicine, in professional direction 6.5. Forestry, scientific specialty „Silviculture, including Dendrology“, subject "Dendrology", announced by University of Forestry in State Gazette No 102 of December 7, 2021, code of the procedure: **FOR-AsP-1121-77**.

Applicant to participate in the competition: Dr. Evgeni Ivanov Tsavkov, Senior Assistant Professor

Author of the statement: PhD Milko Hristov Milev, University of Forestry, professor of professional direction 6.5. Forestry.

1. Short biography of the applicant

Sen. Ass. Prof. Evgeni Tsavkov was born on August 21, 1970. He received his secondary education at the Secondary School "Kliment Ohridski" in Silistra (1988). He graduated from University of Forestry (UF) with a degree in Forestry in 1995 with very good results, obtaining a professional qualification "Master of Engineering in Forestry". In 1995 he started working at UF as an Engineer at the Department of Forestry. After winning a competition, in 1996 he entered as an Assistant Professor in "Dendrology" in the Department of the same name at the Faculty of Forestry (FF) of UF. Since 1999 he has been a senior assistant and since 2002 he has been a chief assistant. As a doctoral student in self-study he prepared a dissertation on the topic "Morphological and genetic variability of oaks from the section Robur Reichenb. in Bulgaria", defended it in 2017, thus obtaining a PhD degree (Diploma №LTU-ONS-2017-92, issued on 31.10.2017).

He completed an international training course in "Wood Anatomy and Tree-Ring Ecology" in Klosters Dorf, Switzerland (2013); courses in Statistical Methods for Data Analysis (2006), in Forest and Land Assessment (2000) and other trainings certified by certificates.

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 the necessary documents and materials referred to in Art. 60, para. 4, incl. the requirements under para. 5 and para. 7 of the RDASUF. He participated in the competition with habilitation report - 10 scientific publications in journals referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information, other scientific products and established citations, which constitute a total number of points covering the minimum national requirements for academic position "Associate Professor" in the professional direction.

The habilitation report is a separate material entitled "Aspects of the dendroflora in Bulgaria and the application of dendrological knowledge in interdisciplinary research". It is formatted in 3 pages with dense formatting and the number of characters (8937) corresponds to 5 pages of standard text in A4 format (1800 characters per page). Included are 10 articles related to the specific topic.

The topics of the habilitation report, the included articles and the substantiated contributions from them are in accordance with the competition and I accept them for fulfillment of the requirement under indicator B4, having collected a total of 198.57 points (with required minimum 100 points) Art. 2b of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and Art. 2a, para. 1 of the RDASUF.

The applicant has submitted copies of the publications on the list and of the required documents. In my opinion, he made a mistake in determining the points on indicator B4 in Annex 1.4 and Table 2, where 181.07 points are indicated, but in fact the point score is 198.57. The mistake results from calculating the points for publications №№ 3, 8 and 10, which are actually 2 times more.

3. Assessment of the applicant's educational activities

The teaching work of Dr. Tsavkov began in 1996 as an assistant in the competitive subject and after positive attestations he became senior assistant and chief assistant. He already has 26 years of teaching experience. He has conducted classes and practices in the subjects "Dendrology" (Bachelor's degree) and "Dendrology of Exotic Species" (Master's degree) for the specialty of Forestry, which are in accordance with his competencies and scientific specialty. Since the academic year 2020/2021 he has been assigned lectures and is the holder of the subject "Dendrology", taught to students majoring in Forestry - full-time and part-time.

In his teaching activity Dr. Tsavkov shows diligence, exactness and dedication. His language training allows him to increase his competence and to teach at the necessary academic level. The accumulated experience contributes to a convincing presentation of the learning topics and to fully participate in the practices. He participated in the development and updating of the curricula in the subjects "Dendrology" for the specialty "Ecology and Environmental Protection", "Dendrology of Exotic Species" for Forestry (Master's degree) and the current (from 2021) "Dendrology" for Forestry. He is a co-author of a practical guide "Dendrology and Decorative Dendrology" (2002), with a volume of 239 pages. He has developed an e-course in the e-learning system (<http://elearn.ltu.bg/>). During the pandemic period since 2020, it has a key role to play in developing a comprehensive synchronous learning system in the Microsoft Teams platform.

Dr. Tsavkov actively participates in the preparation and defences of graduates of the Department - he has been 4 times Head of graduates (3 for Master's degree) and has prepared 104 reviews (68 for Master's degree). He supports the work of doctoral students in the Department. Actively participates in the organization and accumulation of resources for the Departmental Scientific Library. Together with other lecturers from the Department, he develops and maintains a website that supports student learning and contributes to the popularity of the institution.

The information show a very active and diverse training work of the candidate. He has acquired the necessary pedagogical maturity for successful further development.

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 activity can be judged by his participation in scientific and applied research projects. He has participated in the implementation of a total of 32 projects, of 2 of which he was Head. There are 6 participations in international and 4 in national research projects, another 11 are of scientific and educational nature.

Ch. Ass. Prof. Tsavkov has contributed to the foundation and equipment of the complex scientific laboratory of the Department of Dendrology, especially with the renovation and expansion of herbarium collections and their active use for research with students and PhD students. He also participated in the establishment of the University Laboratory for Biotechnological and Molecular Genetic Research in Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine (as a member of the working team of an infrastructure project).

4.2. Characteristics of published scientific results

Dr. Tsavkov's publishing activity is in accordance with the scientific specialty and the competition subject. He participated in the competition with 51 published materials. Of these, 43 are scientific publications, 1 study article and 7 chapters of collective monographs, distributed as follows:

- Habilitation reference - 10 scientific publications in journals that are referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information. These articles can be grouped according to

the contained contributions in 4 main directions: 1/ studies of the dendroflora in Bulgaria (B4.1, B4.4 and B4.5), 2/ systematics (B4.2 and B4.6), 3/ ecology (B4.3, B4.8 and B4.9) and 4/ anatomy of tree species for interdisciplinary research through dendrochronological analysis (B4.3, B4.7, B4.8 and B4.10). Three of the articles are in impact factor journals (B4.5 – B4.7), and the other 7 are in journals referenced and indexed in global databases (Web of Science and Scopus). For half of the articles (5) 17 citations were noticed for a total of 230 points on indicator D.

- Other scientific publications - 41, of which:

- in scientific journals - 3 in journals, referenced and indexed in world databases - G7.1–G7.3;
- in unrefereed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes - 30 (28 reports in proceedings of scientific forums - G8.1–G8.28, 1 article in a journal - G8.29 and 1 report in the Bulletin of the German Dendrological Society - G8.30, 21 of the reports from international forums);

- studies published in non-peer-reviewed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes - 1 (D10.1);

- published chapters from collective monographs - 7 (G11.1–G11.7).

Foreign language publications predominate - 33 (65%). He is a single author of three of the publications (including the study article), 17 papers are with one co-author, 15 - with two and 16 - with more co-authors. Of the joint publications, E. Tsavkov is a first author of two.

Additionally, the materials present information about the co-authorship of 1 book and 2 book chapters, 3 plant identification handbooks and 3 brochures. Total 28 popular science articles are presented. After reviewing and recalling them, I would like to note that Evgeni Tsavkov is the most prominent contemporary popularizer of forestry literature in our country.

I believe that Dr. Tsavkov is one of our authoritative researchers working in the field of Dendrology. His scientific work covers important topics, most part of it is published in a foreign language and is associated with many participations in scientific forums (9 national and 28 international). This is reflected in the significant number of citations and testifies that Dr. Tsavkov is well represented and valued by specialists with dendrological competencies at home and abroad.

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

Citations of 28 of the publications have been found - mainly of articles in journals, which are referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information. For them, the candidate has submitted a list of a total of 82 citations. Of these, 43 are in scientific journals, 29 - in monographs and scientific papers and 10 - in unrefereed journals with scientific review. Two of the standalone publications were cited (3 times in total), and 8 citations were found for the publications with 2nd place. According to this indicator, the candidate has the largest excess over the minimum requirements - over 5 times.

Along with the large number of citations, a sign of the establishment of Dr. Tsavkov as a competent specialist are his five reviews of manuscripts for renowned scientific journals Nauka za Gorata (Bulgarian Forest Science), Forestry Ideas, Ecologia Balkanica and Turkish Journal of Botany.

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

The contributions in the scientific publications of Dr. Tsavkov are summarized in 8 areas. I accept them, as well as their classification. The predominance of those of a scientific nature is natural, due to the nature of dendrological topics, which is the foundation of applied forestry research. In terms of style, the wording of some of the guidelines (1 and 3) and their justification should focus on

the results obtained (what has been established and what they contribute to), instead of saying what has been studied.

A positive side of the candidate's scientific creativity are the complex approach and multidisciplinary. This makes it difficult to distinguish the contributions in the categories from scientific to applied, but on the other hand it gives a modern sound to his research and openness to team research.

As significant achievements I highlight: The compilation of a detailed and multifunctional database of tree species from the flora of Bulgaria with the inclusion of newly established anthropophytes and data on the distribution of 180 medicinal, 307 honey and 107 calciphilous species (publications B4.1, B4.4 and B4.5; G8.15 and G8.16). Validation as a taxon of the so-called Rila oak - *Quercus protoroburoides* Donchev & Bouzov ex Tashev & Tsavkov, sp. nov. The chorological information for 4 species of the dendroflora of the Sofia floristic region has been enriched (B4.2). The established positive results from the introduction of tree species in the Knyazhevska plantation (B4.9 and G11.6), forest plantations near the city of Varna (G8.6) and in the field afforestation in Northeastern Bulgaria (G8.5). The correct use of *Quercus robur*, *Quercus cerris* and *Gleditsia triacanthos* in the forest protection zones is justified. Specific reactions of the radial increments of the main species (Norway spruce, common beech, Balkan pine, Bosnian pine, etc.) in natural disturbances and meteorological extremes have been established - as indications for adaptability to climate change. A database for 188 natural disturbances in the coniferous forests of Bulgaria for a 150-year period has been compiled, and the dominant role of fires, windstorms and avalanches has been established (G4.7 and G11.5). Versatile results for oaks, incl. for wood chemistry (B4.8, B4.10; G8.19, G8.20 and G8.25). The created electronic and digital platforms and the use of GIS for training purposes (G7.2, G8.14 and G8.24).

I appreciate the wide geographical coverage of the research - Vitosha (G8.26), Rhodopes (G8.11, G8.21, G8.22 and G8.24), Pirin (G8.28), Strandzha (G8.10), NE Bulgaria (G8.5), "Golden Sands" (G8.2) and others. Knowledge of the dendrological composition of park sites in Sofia (G8.23) and Silistra (G8.1) has been achieved. Sites from sea level to the Highlands (G8.9 and G8.17) are covered, a variety of methods have been applied, from dendrochronological to historical analysis, and his interests in deciduous and coniferous species are balanced. the academic development of a habilitated lecturer in Dendrology. I consider this versatility and wide-ranging to be a significant positive for the academic development of a habilitated lecturer of Dendrology.

5. Assessment of the applicant's personal contribution

The candidate has 3 single-authored publications and 17 with one co-author. I accept his participation in the general publications as equal and I am convinced that he has a specific personal contribution to them.

To increase his qualification, Ch. Ass. Prof. Tsavkov has participated in 7 specialized courses. The developed 32 projects and the management of 2 of them have an important role. He has 37 participations in scientific conferences and symposiums, of which 28 are international (11 of them are in Bulgaria).

I highly appreciate the scientific activity of the candidate, which is a prerequisite for conducting independent scientific work and scientific guidance of graduates, doctoral students and research projects in the field of Dendrology.

6. Critical notes and recommendations

Some critical remarks of a stylistic-editorial and technical nature can be addressed to the candidate's work. The presented materials are very carefully prepared. I found a discrepancy for the points on indicator B4, indicated in item 2. The habilitation report for the 10 articles is presented very concisely. In the List of cited publications, items D13.17 and D14.14. are presented in such a way that the relevance of the citation to the authorship of the candidate is not evident (a collective monograph in which the candidate participates in three of its chapters is cited).

I expect that in the future joint scientific work Dr. Tsavkov will more often take a leading position. I recommend increasing the publications in journals with impact factor.

7. Personal impressions

I have definite positive impressions from the teaching and research work of Ch. Ass. Prof. E. Tsavkov. He speaks English, Russian and German. Has the ability to work with Microsoft Office applications, for graphics processing (Adobe Photoshop) and for statistical processing (SYN-TAX, BIO-DIV, STATISTICA, ORIGINPRO). Successfully handles microscopic techniques for the preparation of preparations for anatomical analysis of plant organs with specialized software Progres. He demonstrates solid knowledge of the taxonomy, morphology, ecology and biology of tree species. He presents himself confidently and authoritatively among the scientific college. My impressions of the communication on the publication and review of articles in Forestry Ideas journal are positive. The candidate's statements in the media, with which he contributes to the good name of the University, are positive.

Dr. Tsavkov has published large number of popular science articles (28), in which he has made a major contribution to the rich illustration. They are useful for the practice and contribute to its popularity among the local forestry community. Impressive are his competencies in the history of forestry in Bulgaria and his contribution to the enrichment and maintenance of the Museum Collection of UF, of which he is the Organizer since 2010 - an activity in which he shows not only perseverance and diligence, but also research passion. He is a member of the Bulgarian Botanical Society (since 1999) and the German Dendrological Society (Deutsche Dendrologische Gesellschaft) (since 2014). Presentations from external organizations (Faculty of Biology at Sofia University, Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation and Eco-Community Foundation) are in demand for expert and consulting activities. He is rightly included in the editorial board of Gora (Forest) journal.

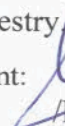
The candidate is actively involved in the organization and conduct of teaching and research activities, conferences and other forums and events at the University. He is a member and actively participates in the meetings of the General Assembly of UF, the Academic Council (2001-2003) and the Faculty Council of Faculty of Forestry. I am confident that as a habilitated lecturer I will contribute even more to the implementation of common faculty and university tasks.

8. Conclusion

From the presented materials it is evident that Ch. Ass. Prof. Dr. E. Tsavkov meets the relevant for the professional field scientometric requirements for academic position "Associate Professor" to the Regulations for Development of Academic Staff at the University of Forestry, exceeding them, especially in indicators B - nearly twice and D - more than 5 times.

Based on a comprehensive assessment of the qualities and the results presented by the applicant I PROPOSE the applicant Dr. Evgeni Ivanov Tsavkov to take the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the subject "Dendrology" in professional direction 6.5. Forestry

Author of the statement:



Statement delivered on: 30.3.2022 г.