

ФРС-2475/31.03.2021

STATEMENT

on the materials for participation in a competition for acquiring 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 № 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: Dr. Petar Zhelev, Professor of Forest Genetics, Department of Dendrology, University of Forestry

1. Short biography of the applicant

Dr. Evgeni Tsavkov obtained M.Sc. degree in the University of Forestry in 1995. After a brief period as engineer in the Department of Silviculture, in 1996 he was appointed as Assistant Professor of Dendrology, and in 2002 became Senior Assistant Professor. His Ph.D. thesis on the systematics and genetic diversity of the oaks of section *Robur* was defended in 2017.

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)

Dr. Tsavkov has submitted all the necessary documents required according to the RDASUF. The information clearly indicates that he meets all scientometric requirements and exceeds some of them. The scores by indicators are as follows: Indicator A – 50 pts (required 50); Indicator B – 181.07 pts (required 100); Indicator G – 215.35 pts (required 200) and indicator D – 270 pts (required 50).

3. Assessment of the applicant's educational activities

Dr. Evgeni Tsavkov has more 25 years of experience as university teacher. During this long career he has taught Dendrology and Dendrology of exotic species classes to B.Sc. and M.Sc. students, including lectures, laboratory exercises, practical courses to students of different majors, some of them not existing anymore. Since the beginning of the academic year 2020-2021 he is the main lecturer in Dendrology – one of the fundamental subjects included in the curriculum of the future foresters, constituting part of the "alphabet" for this job. Here he is a successor of an important tradition started by the professors Todor Dimitrov, Boris Stefanoff,

Atanas Ganchev, Jelez Donchev, Nedyalko Delkov, and Stefan Yurukov. Dr. Tsavkov is a co-author of a Practical handbook of Dendrology.

Dr. Tsavkov enjoys very good reputation among the students. He is a good and demanding teacher. Inquiries performed among the students resulted several times in electing him as the "Teacher of the year".

He mentored four diploma theses, three of them for M.Sc., and all his students scored excellent marks. He reviewed also more than 100 (mostly M.Sc.) theses. This demonstrates his activities not only during the education of the students, but also in their graduation.

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

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

Dr. Tsavkov presents information about participation in 32 research and applied projects, six of them international. Of these we could mention the Bulgarian-Swiss Forestry Programme, Bulgarian-Swiss project on the subalpine forests, three bilateral projects with Romania. He took part also in a project for establishment of a new lab. He was a leader of two projects. All this shows a remarkable research activity, which contributed to increasing of his professional qualification.

4.2. Characteristics of published scientific results

The applicant submitted for the competition 51 publications, and a Ph.D. thesis. Thirteen of the publications are published in scientific journals refereed by Web of Science and Scopus. Thirty publications are in journals outside the attention of these databases, and in proceedings of international and national scientific conferences and symposia. One larger paper, called stadium, is published also in conference proceedings, and seven publications are monograph chapters. Of the publications, 22 are in English, 1 – in German, 10 – in Russian, and the remaining 18 are in Bulgarian. Part of the publications are in prestigious international journals like Forest Ecology and Management, Phytotaxa, Phytologia Balcanica.

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

Dr. Tsavkov presented information about 82 citations and more than a half of them are in refereed journals. This indicates first that he exceeds several times the minimum requirements, and more important, that the scientific community is aware with his achievements and has evaluated them by citing.

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

The scientific work of Dr. Tsavkov is variable and with clearly expressed element of interdisciplinarity. Ten of the publications are united in a habilitation report entitled "Aspects of the dendroflora in Bulgaria and application of dendrological knowledge in interdisciplinary

research." In the reports he demonstrates the application of dendrological knowledge to solve a variety of scientific problems related to taxonomy, ecology and distribution, and the anatomical and morphological traits of the tree species. The report is written at a high scientific level and demonstrates the erudition of the candidate.

The scientific work of Dr. Tsavkov can be very generally classified in the following areas:

- Studies on the distribution, systematics, diversity and conservation of tree species.
- Ecological studies on tree species using a wide range of methods - dendrochronological, morphological and anatomical, etc.
- Interdisciplinary research using dendrological expertise.

The candidate has presented a more detailed classification of his contributions, which is objective and accurate. For the purposes of the present statement, a detailed examination of the publications is not necessary and I therefore highlight only the most important and substantial contributions.

In the field of "classical dendrology", significant research on the taxonomy of such a complex group as the Oak genus can be mentioned. *Q. protoroburoides* was validated, and the diversity of other species of the genus was studied. Dendrological characteristics of different natural areas and those in urban areas can also be mentioned here. Quite significant attention is paid to the part of the dendroflora, used as medicinal plants.

Dr. Tsavkov has mastered a wide range of research methods, as evidenced by his diverse scientific work. In the ecological research of tree species he applies the dendrochronological method in general, also called depending on its specific applications dendroecological, dendroclimatic, etc. Important patterns for the impact of environmental conditions on different tree species have been established, and the results are especially valuable when concerning long periods of time, such as in the case of Bosnian Pine.

His interdisciplinary research is diverse and concerns a wide range of issues - application of dendrology in archaeological research, study of the properties of wood in relation to the barrel industry, forest vegetation properties of soil types and others.

One group of his publications can simultaneously be classified as a contribution to nature conservation. These are the publications on rare plant communities in volume 3 of the Red Data Book of Bulgaria, the dendrological characteristics of different protected areas.

The scientific contributions of Dr. Tsavkov are diverse and are the result of in-depth research. In terms of quality and quantity, they fully meet the requirements for the academic position of "Associate Professor".

The popularizing activity of Dr. Tsavkov deserves high evaluation. He has published, independently and in co-authorship, over 30 popular science articles, some of which, although not published in scientific journals, are in the nature of scientific research. In these articles he presents various moments from the history of forests and forestry in our country, and in an accessible form - the results of scientific research in which he participated. At least some of these articles are the result of his deep interests in the field of history of science, forests and forestry in our country. For many years he has been the curator of the Museum of LTU, which he enriched with new materials. He is a member of the editorial board of Gora magazine.

5. Assessment of the applicant's personal contribution

The applicant's personal contribution to joint publications stands out clearly, as he has a well-defined set of expertise and skills, with which he participates in these publications. In the few of his publications, in which I am a co-author, my impressions of the work of Dr. Tsavkov are that he has a full participation in all stages – from data collection and materials, conducting experiments and data analysis to writing the publication itself. I can confidently declare that his contribution is equal, and in some of the publications - leading.

6. Critical remarks and recommendations.

I have no significant critical remarks or recommendations.

7. Personal impressions

I know Dr. Tsavkov since 1991 in my capacity first, as his teacher, and then, since 1996 - as his colleague in the department. He is a hardworking and precise researcher with his own style. Outside of teaching and research, he has broad interests in the field of art, especially music, photography and in some other areas. He enjoys the respect of both his colleagues - teachers and students. He is a member of the Bulgarian Botanical Society and the Deutsche Dendrologische Gesellschaft.

8. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the materials presented in the competition, as well as on the basis of my own impressions, I can conclude that Dr. Evgeni Tsavkov meets fully the requirements set in the respective legislative documents for the academic position "Associate Professor" and in many cases significantly exceeds them. Therefore, I propose with pleasure the applicant for the academic position "Associate Professor" in Dendrology.

Date: 30.03.2022

Author of the statement:

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Professor Petar Zhelev, Ph.D. /

The Statement was submitted on 31.03.2022