

## STANDPOINT



**Subject:** Competition for an academic position "Associate Professor" in field of the higher education: 6. Agricultural sciences and veterinary medicine; professional field 6.2 Plant protection; scientific specialty Plant protection (phytopathology), announced in the State Gazette, issue 62/21.07.2023, by Agricultural University-Plovdiv

**Candidate for participation in the competition:** Assist. prof. Neshka Georgieva Piperkova PhD from the Agricultural University-Plovdiv

**Opinion of:** Assoc. Prof. Vinelina Panayotova Yankova-Mihaylova PhD from the Maritsa Vegetable Crops Research Institute - Plovdiv, field of the higher education 6. Agricultural sciences and veterinary medicine; professional field 6.2 Plant protection; scientific specialty Plant protection, designated as a member of the scientific jury according to order No. RD 16-902/25.09.2023 of the Rector of the Agricultural University - Plovdiv

### 1. Brief introduction of the candidate.

Assist. prof. Neshka Georgieva Piperkova PhD has graduated the Agricultural University - Plovdiv (Higher Agricultural Institute Vasil Kolarov"- Plovdiv), speciality Plant Protection in 1987. During the period 1988-1999 she was an assistant at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv Department of Phytopathology, from 1999 to 2023, she was the main assistant in the same faculty, where she continues to work at the present time as a lecturer in Phytopathology. In 2013, she successfully defended her dissertation and obtained the educational and scientific degree "Doctor". She speaks English and Russian and she works with basic computer programs (Word, Excel, Power Point, etc.) and statistical analysis programs. She has specialized in electron microscopy at the University of Bologna in Italy. She participated in the course of study in modern horticulture at the University of Leuven, Belgium. Able to work in a team, responsible and competent, she has teaching and professional experience.

### 2. General description of the scientific production.

In the competition for academic position "Associate Professor", Assist. prof. Neshka Georgieva Piperkova, PhD participates with 28 scientific works, grouped as follows:

- Publications related to the doctoral dissertation - 3 which are not subject to consideration;
- Ten scientific publications in issues that are referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information;
- One book, published on the base of the defended doctoral thesis for awarding educational and scientific degree „Doctor“;

*- Five articles and reports, published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information;*

*- Nine articles and reports, published in non-refereed journals with scientific review or in edited collective volumes.*

To prepare the standpoint, 25 scientific works are subject to analysis.

The scientific works of Assist. prof. Neshka Piperkova, PhD, have been published mostly in scientific journals (20 issues) and 4 articles are in books of scientific conferences. The publications are in the journals: Plant Disease, Acta Universitatis Agriculturae et Silviculturae Mendelianae Brunensis, European Journal of Plant Pathology, Molecules, Plants, Acta Agrobotanica, Agricultural Science - 5 publications, Ecologia Balkanica, Agrolife Scientific Journal, Scientific-agronomic journal Volgograd, Turkish Journal of Agricultural Science, Plant protection - 5 publications. One book was published based on a defended dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "doctor". Some of the publications are in prestigious, refereed and indexed journals, with an impact factor and impact rank, which is important for the assessment, quality and value of the conducted studies (Plant Disease SJR 0.575, IF 2.941/Q2; Acta Universitatis Agriculturae et Silviculturae Mendelianae Brunensis SJR 0.219/Q3; European Journal of Plant Pathology SJR 0.679, IF 1.58/Q1; Molecules SJR 0.705, IF 4.927/Q2; Plants SJR 0.79, IF 4.827/Q1; Acta Agrobotanica SJR 0.452, IF 1.2/Q2). All this is proof of the high level of the candidate's scientific research work.

The personal participation of Assist. prof. Neshka Piperkova PhD in the mentioned 24 scientific papers is as follows: in 5 publications she is the independent author, in 9 of the publications she is the first author, in 5 of the publications she is the second author and in the remaining 5 publications she is the third and following author. Co-authored publications are evidence of the ability to work in a team and to consider problems in the field of plant protection and specifically in phytopathology in an interdisciplinary manner.

The candidate's research activity is in the field of phytopathology, anatomy and physiology of plants. Assist. prof. Neshka Piperkova, PhD works in a team with specialists in various scientific fields, which makes the research of higher scientific value. The publication activity of the candidate is mainly in English, which is a prerequisite for the scientific developments to be accessible, read and cited by a wide range of specialists in Bulgaria and abroad.

The results of her scientific production Assist. prof. Neshka Piperkova PhD presents in two international symposia, two international conferences, one international congress and four national scientific conferences with 9 poster reports.

### **3. Teaching activity**

Assist. prof. Neshka Piperkova PhD is already an established lecturer in the Department of Phytopathology at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv with 35 years and 6 months of experience. She gives lectures, laboratory and practical exercises to agronomic staff from Bachelor, Master in the disciplines: General

phytopathology, Special phytopathology, Plant diseases in green systems, Plant immunity, Diseases and pests during storage of plant produce. According to the presented certificate issued by AU-Plovdiv for the period 2018 - 2023 assist. prof. Neshka Piperkova, PhD has a total of 3130.7 hours of auditory and non-auditory employment.

The lectural activity of the candidate is complemented by the training of 32 graduates who have successfully defended their diplomas. Assist. prof. Neshka Piperkova, PhD is a member of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Plant Protection and Agroecology in the period 2012-2015. She has co-published two training manuals for phytopathology exercises.

#### **4. Research activity**

##### *Areas of publication*

A major part of the publishing activity of Assist. prof. Neshka Piperkova PhD, is in the field of phytopathology. Studies are in three main directions: Diagnosis, identification and research of new for the country and known, but poorly studied diseases of cultural plants (in vines, plum planting material, cherries, sunflowers, oil rose, almonds, blueberries, diseases during fruit storage and others.); molecular identification of diseases; biological efficacy of essential oils, antagonists, chemical plant protection products and other agents for the control of economically important plant diseases. Most of the studies have concentrated on pathology in fruit crops. The candidate's research on peach curl (study of anatomical, ultrastructural, biochemical and physiological changes in infected leaves) has been continued, which complements the results of the dissertation work. Part of the publications contain the results of the dissertation, which makes it possible to popularize what has been achieved.

I accept the author reference for the contributions, which are summarized in 4 original scientific applied contributions and 3 confirmatory scientific applied contributions. In solving the goals and tasks, multidisciplinary approaches were used. The obtained results contribute to the enrichment of phytopathological knowledge.

##### *Citation and referencing of scientific production.*

Assist. prof. Neshka Piperkova, PhD presented 15 citations distributed as follows: Citations in scientific issues, referenced and indexed in world-class databases with scientific information or in monographs and collective volumes - 13 nos.; Cited in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review - 1 nos.; Cited in non-refereed journals with scientific review - 1 nos. Two of the citations №6 and №12 are self-citations which I do not accept and will not be assessed, but this does not significantly change the candidate's total points.

##### *Participation in scientific projects*

Assist. prof. Neshka Piperkova PhD participated in 5 projects: she is the head of a project financed by AU-Plovdiv; participant in a project at the National Scientific Research Institute/Ministry of Education, participant at the

National Science Program; participant in a project at Agricultural Academy - Sofia and participant in an international educational project.

The individual report on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements of the Law on the development of the academic staff of the Republic of Bulgaria for "associate professor" shows that the candidate meets the requirements. The scientific production, presented by Assist. prof. Neshka Piperkova PhD forms a total number of points 594.8 out of the required 400 points.

#### **5. Notes and recommendations.**

My recommendation to the candidate is to publish more intensively the results of her research activity and to pass on her scientific and professional knowledge and experience in the field of phytopathology not only to graduate students but also to doctoral students.

#### **6. Conclusion.**

Based on the analysis of the pedagogical, scientific and applied activities of the candidate I believe that Assist. prof. Neshka Georgieva Piperkova PhD fully meets requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and the Regulations of the Agraricultural University for its application.

The presented scientific production meets the national scientometric requirements for acquiring the academic position "Associate Professor". Assist. prof. Neshka Georgieva Piperkova PhD, is a qualified specialist with many years of professional experience in the field of phytopathology. This gives me reason to **POSITIVELY** evaluate her overall activity.

I would like to suggest to the honoured Scientific Jury to vote positively, and the Faculty Council of the Plant Protection and Agroecology Faculty at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv to elect **Assist. prof. Neshka Georgieva Piperkova PhD** for the academic position of "associate professor" in the scientific specialty **Plant Protection (phytopathology)**.

Date 17.11.2023  
Plovdiv

PREPARED THE STANDPOINT:   
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