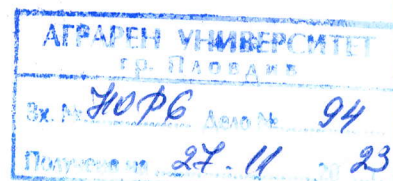


## STANDPOINT



**Subject:** Competition for an academic position “Associate Professor” in higher education: 6. Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine; professional field: 6.2 Plant Protection; scientific specialty: Plant Protection (Phytopathology), announced in the State Gazette, No. 62/21.07.2023 by Agricultural University, Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

**Candidate:** Chief assistant Neshka Georgieva Piperkova PhD, Agricultural University, Plovdiv

**By** Prof. Stoyka Petkova Masheva PhD, field of higher education: 6. Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine; professional field: 6.2. Plant Protection; scientific specialty: Plant Protection (Phytopathology), designated as a member of the Scientific jury by order No. RD-16-902/25.09.2023 of the Rector of the Agricultural University, Plovdiv.

### 1. Brief introduction of the candidate.

Chief assistant Neshka Georgieva Piperkova PhD is the only candidate in the competition for the academic position “Associate Professor”, announced for the needs of the Department of Phytopathology at the Agricultural University, Plovdiv. The documents for the competition have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Application of the Law and the Regulations for its Application at the AU - Plovdiv.

Neshka Georgieva Piperkova graduated from higher education in 1987 at the Agricultural University, Plovdiv with the qualification of Agronomist Engineer in Plant Protection. During the period 1988 - 1999, she was appointed assistant in the Department of Phytopathology, and from 1999 to 2023 and is currently the chief assistant in the same department, Faculty of Plant Protection and Agroecology. In 2013, she successfully defended her dissertation and obtained the scientific and educational degree "Doctor". She speaks Russian and English. She completed a specialization in electron microscopy at the University of Bologna, Italy and a course in modern horticulture in Leuven, Belgium. She has good computer skills.

Neshka Piperkova was a member of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Plant Protection and Agroecology in the period 2012-2015.

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

In the competition for "Associate professor" Chief assistant Neshka Piperkova, PhD participates in the nomenclature speciality with total production of 28 scientific works, grouped as follows:

- *Scientific publications related to the doctoral dissertation - 3 issues, which are not subject to consideration;*
- *Published book based on a defended doctoral thesis for awarding educational and scientific degree "doctor" - 1 issue;*
- *Scientific publications in peer-reviewed and refereed scientific journals – 10 issues.*
- *Articles and reports published in referenced scientific and indexed in world renowned databases scientific journals – 5 issues;*

*- Articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes – 9 issues;*

Dr. Piperkova participated as a co-author in the publication of 2 issues *Manuals of Phytopathology and special Phytopathology*.

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

The scientific works of Chief Assistant Neshka Piperkova PhD are published mostly in scientific journals and 4 articles are in proceedings 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*, *Ecologia Balkanica*, *Agrolife Scientific Journal*, *Научно-агрономический журнал*, *Turkish Journal of Agricultural Science*, *Plant protection*. The published book is based on a defended dissertation work 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 evaluation, 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).

The analysis of Dr. Piperkova's personal contribution shows that she is the independent author of 5 publications (20%), first author of 9 publications (36%), second author in 5 and third and subsequent author in the remaining 5. The leading role of the candidate in a large part of the presented publications is testimony to her active participation in the conducted research and the preparation of the materials for publication. Co-authored publications are evidence of her teamwork skills, and the participation of specialists from other specialties increases the scientific value of the research.

The publication activity of the candidate is mainly in English, which makes scientific developments accessible, read and cited by a wide range of specialists at home and abroad.

Neshka Piperkova presents the results of her scientific research in two international symposia, two international conferences, one international congress and four national scientific conferences with 9 poster reports.

### **3. Teaching activity**

Chief assistant Neshka Piperkova PhD is an established lecturer in the Department of Phytopathology. She conducts lectures, laboratory and practical exercises and extracurricular activities on general and special phytopathology, plant immunity, plant diseases in green systems, diseases and enemies during storage of plant produce to undergraduate and graduate students, to interns at the Center for Continuing training.

#### *Academic employment of the candidate*

According to the report submitted by AU for the period 2018-2023, the candidate has a total of 3130.7 hours of classroom and extra-auditory employment.

The lectural activity of Dr. Piperkova is complemented by 32 successfully graduated graduates (bachelor's and master's degrees).

### **4. Scientific research activity.**



### *Areas of publication*

The phytopathological focus of Piperkova's research is clearly evident from the presented scientific works. Her scientific studies are in three main directions: identification and research of new for the country and known but poorly studied diseases of cultural plants (vine, plums, cherries, sunflower, oil rose, almond, blueberries, diseases during fruit storage, etc.); molecular identification of diseases (sequencing parts of the genome); biological efficacy of essential oils, antagonists, chemical PPPs and other agents against economically important plant diseases; special admirations deserve the ongoing studies on peach curl (study of anatomical, ultrastructural, biochemical and physiological changes in infected leaves), which are a continuation of the dissertation work and present a complex study of this pathogen.

The content of the presented publications objectively reflects the research conducted and their compliance with the professional direction of the announced competition. They are prepared in a good scientific style, the obtained results are correctly, thoroughly and competently interpreted. Conclusions have been made that are scientifically substantiated.

The candidate has summarized the results of her research work in 4 original scientific applied contributions and 3 confirmatory scientific applied contributions.

I accept the attached author reference for contributions that are original and enrich phytopathological theory and practice.

### *Citation and referencing of scientific production*

The candidate presented 15 citations distributed as follows: Citations in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information or in monographs and collective volumes 13 nos.; Cited in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review 1 item; Cited in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals 1 no. Two of the citations #6 and #12 are self-citations, which I do not accept and are not subject to evaluation.

The candidate has participated in 4 international and 5 national scientific forums, which is a contribution to the popularization of the results of her research activity.

### *Participation in scientific projects*

The candidate is a participant in 5 projects: she is the head of a project financed by AU, Plovdiv; participant in projects at the Scientific Research Fund; to the National Science Program; to the Agricultural academy, Sofia; and participant in an International educational projects.

The individual report on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria for "associate professor" shows that the candidate fully meets the requirements. Her scientific output forms a total number of points 594.8, which after reducing 30 points for the two autocites remains 564.8 and significantly exceeds the required 400 points.

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

I have no remarks on the presented materials. My recommendation is that the candidate to transfer her scientific experience and knowledge to doctoral students.

## 6. Conclusion.

Based on the analysis of the lectural activity, scientific and scientific-applied activities of the candidate, I consider that Chief assistant Neshka Georgieva Piperkova, PhD fully meets requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, Regulations for its implementation and the Regulations for its application of the Agrarian University.

She is an established researcher in the field of Phytopathology, who presents herself in the competition with sufficient volume and quality of scientific production. Her active teaching activity and guidance of graduates are proof of her professionalism and ability to combine scientific and teaching work.

All this gives me reason to **POSITIVELY** evaluate her overall activity.

I take the liberty of proposing to the honorable Scientific Jury to also vote positively, and the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Plant Protection and Agroecology at the Agricultural University, Plovdiv to elect Chief assistant *Neshka Georgieva Piperkova*, PhD, as an "*Associate Professor*" in the scientific specialty "*Plant Protection (Phytopathology)*".

Date 16.11.2023  
Plovdiv

PREPARED THE STANDPOINT: .....

/Prof. Stoyka Masheva PhD/

