

OPINION

regarding the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor (“доцент”) in the area of higher education 4. “Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics”, professional field 4.4. Earth Sciences, and scientific specialty “Ecology and Ecosystem Protection”, announced in State Gazette No. 48 of 26.05.2026, with candidate Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Dimitrinka Binova Kuzmanova

by Prof. Dr. Violina Angelova Rizova, appointed under Order No. ПД 16-770/22.06.2026 of the Rector of the Agricultural University – Plovdiv as Chair of the scientific jury

1. Brief presentation of the candidate.

Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Dimitrinka Kuzmanova graduated from the Higher Institute of Agriculture “Vasil Kolarov” – Plovdiv (now the Agricultural University – Plovdiv) in 1993 with the qualification “Agronomist Engineer”. In 2002–2005 she was a doctoral student at the Agricultural University – Plovdiv, and in 2006 she obtained the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in the scientific specialty “Sheep and Goat Breeding” (professional field 6.3. Animal Husbandry). Her professional career has been entirely connected with the Agricultural University: from 2010 to 2015 she was an expert at the Research Centre, where she took part in organizing and carrying out research activities and in preparing and implementing research projects, and since 2015 she has been a Chief Assistant Professor in “Ecology and Ecosystem Protection”.

2. General description of the scientific output.

In the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor, Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Dimitrinka Kuzmanova participates with a total output of 35 works, of which 4 publications related to the doctoral dissertation are not subject to review. 31 works are submitted for review – 30 scientific publications and 1 book published on the basis of the defended dissertation. No textbooks or study guides have been submitted. Of the publications, 29 are in English. The candidate is the sole author of 2 works (the book and G18), first author of 4, second author of 3, and third or subsequent author of the remaining 22. She has also presented 21 poster presentations and 1 oral presentation at international scientific forums.

The scientific output is distributed by groups of indicators as follows:

Group B comprises 9 scientific publications (B1–B9) submitted as the habilitation work; no monograph has been submitted. All of them are indexed in Web of Science, 8 of them in Q4 (B1–B8), while B9 is indexed in Web of Science without a quartile. For indicator V the candidate receives 104 points.

Group G (Г) comprises 21 scientific publications (G1–G21) and the book published on the basis of the defended dissertation (20 points). Of the publications, 18 are indexed in Web of Science – 1 in Q3 with an impact factor of 0.47 (G11), 13 in Q4 and 4 without a quartile; three are outside Web of Science (G16–G18). The total number of points for indicator G is 241.

In reviewing the output, I found that three of the works included under indicator G do not correspond sufficiently to the thematic scope of professional field 4.4. “Earth Sciences”: the book “Study, analysis and assessment of existing sheep production systems in the lowland part of Plovdiv Region”, developed on the basis of a dissertation in professional field 6.3. “Animal Husbandry”; publication G10 “Agronomic evaluation of common wheat varieties for productivity and quality characteristics”, related to agronomy; and publication G18 “Analysis of the economic efficiency of sheep production from White Maritsa sheep”, related to agricultural economics. Therefore, in my opinion, they should not be included in the assessment of the output in the present competition.

After their exclusion, 28 scientific publications remain for analysis – 9 under indicator B and 19 under indicator G – and the points under G decrease from 241 to 203. Of these, 20 are in Q4, 1 is in Q3, 5 are indexed in Web of Science without a quartile (V9, G1, G12, G15 and G19), and 2 are in other peer-reviewed publications (G16 and G17). In these publications the candidate is first author of 4, second author of 3, and third or subsequent author of the remaining 21.

The candidate meets the minimum national requirements under all indicators: 104 points under B against 100 required, 203 points under G against 200 required, and 80 points under D (Д) against 50 required. Together with the 50 points under indicator A (А), the total is 437 points against a minimum of 400 required. On the basis of the analysis performed, I consider that the candidate's output subject to assessment in the present competition meets the minimum national requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor.

3. Teaching activity.

Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Kuzmanova has been a Chief Assistant Professor since 24.08.2015 and has over 11 years of teaching experience in the Department of Chemistry, Phytopharmacy and Ecology and Environmental Protection at the Faculty of Plant Protection and Agroecology of the Agricultural University – Plovdiv.

Teaching load of the candidate.

For the academic years 2021/2022 to 2025/2026 her total teaching load is 3,097.85 hours (about 619 hours per year on average), including lectures, seminar/laboratory classes and extracurricular work. In the Bachelor's degree (full-time and part-time study) she lectures in "Protected Areas", "European Environmental Standards", "Ornithology" and "Biogeography", and in the Master's degree – in "Forest Ecosystems and Sustainable Nature Management" and "Landscape Ecology" in the programmes "Sustainable Nature Management and Ecotourism" and "Engineering Ecology".

Her teaching activity is complemented by the supervision of 12 successfully defended graduates (8 Bachelor's and 4 Master's), whose topics relate to biodiversity, ecological assessment, protected areas, avifauna and rare species.

Published teaching materials.

No textbooks or study guides have been submitted.

Developed curricula.

The candidate has developed curricula for "Protected Areas" (for the specialties "Ecology and Environmental Protection" and "Plant Protection", Bachelor's degree), "European Environmental Standards" (Bachelor's degree) and "Forest Ecosystems and Sustainable Nature Management" (Master's programme "Sustainable Nature Management and Ecotourism"). Her teaching activity corresponds directly to the subject of the competition.

4. Research activity.

Areas of publication.

The candidate's scientific output is thematically coherent and can be grouped into four main areas: (1) biodiversity, structure and ecological organization of parasite communities in freshwater ecosystems; (2) application of parasites and parasite communities in the ecological assessment and monitoring of freshwater ecosystems; (3) circulation and bioaccumulation of heavy metals and metalloids in freshwater ecosystems and the use of parasites as bioindicators; (4) parasitological research as a basis for the protection, monitoring and management of aquatic ecosystems. I accept the candidate's submitted summary of scientific and applied-science contributions. Publications G16 and G17 are not indexed in Web of Science or Scopus, but they are thematically related to biodiversity and bioindication in freshwater ecosystems, and I therefore accept them as other peer-reviewed scientific publications in the specialty of the competition.

Citations and referencing of the scientific output.

The candidate has submitted 16 citations of 12 of her publications, all in publications referenced and indexed in international databases, 9 of them in publications with an impact factor; nine citations are by foreign authors. The citing publications include Reviews in Fish Biology and Fisheries (Q1), Marine Pollution Bulletin (Q1) and Parasitologia (Q2). This shows the international recognition of her results. The total number of points under indicator D is 80.

Participation in research projects.

She has participated in 3 research projects – one with external funding (National Scientific Programme “Critical and Strategic Raw Materials for Green Transition and Sustainable Development”, 2024–2028) and two funded by the Agricultural University – Plovdiv: No. 11-16 “Parasites and parasite communities of freshwater fish from the Danube River, Bulgarian section, and their bioindicator significance” (2016–2018) and No. 06-25 “Risk assessment of the use of fish from reservoirs with different types of anthropogenic pressure” (2025–2027). All three are directly related to the subject of the competition.

5. Remarks and recommendations.

I have no substantial remarks on the candidate’s documentation and scientific output. I recommend that she: (1) direct her efforts towards publishing more articles in international journals with a higher impact factor and quartile, since the predominant part of her publications to date are in Q4; (2) expand her participation in international research projects; (3) concentrate her future publication activity in the field of the scientific specialty “Ecology and Ecosystem Protection”; (4) in view of her experience and the curricula she has developed, prepare and publish a teaching aid for the disciplines she teaches.

6. Conclusion.

On the basis of the analysis of the candidate’s teaching, scientific and applied-science activity, I consider that Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Dimitrinka Binova Kuzmanova meets the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its Implementation, and the Regulations of the Agricultural University for its application, as well as the minimum national requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor, even after the exclusion of the works outside the thematic scope of the competition.

All this gives me grounds to assess her overall activity **POSITIVELY**.

I take the liberty of proposing that the esteemed Scientific Jury also vote positively, and that the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Plant Protection and Agroecology at the Agricultural University – Plovdiv elect Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Dimitrinka Binova Kuzmanova as Associate Professor in the area of higher education 4. “Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics”, professional field 4.4. Earth Sciences and scientific specialty “Ecology and Ecosystem Protection”.

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THE OPINION:
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