



REVIEW

Regarding the competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the scientific specialty “Ecology and Ecosystem Protection”, announced in the State Gazette, Issue No. 48 of 26 May 2026, with Chief Assistant Professor Dimitrinka Binova Kuzmanova, PhD, as a candidate

by Associate Professor Gana Minkova Gecheva, PhD, University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski”, appointed pursuant to Order No. RD 16-770/22 June 2026 of the Rector of the Agricultural University – Plovdiv as a member of the Scientific Jury

1. Brief presentation of the candidate

During the period 2002–2005, Dimitrinka Binova Kuzmanova was a PhD student in the scientific specialty “Sheep and Goat Breeding”, professional field Animal Husbandry, at the Agricultural University – Plovdiv (AU). From 2010 to 2015, she held the position of expert at the Research Centre of AU. Since 2015, she has held the academic position of Chief Assistant Professor. In parallel, she has performed the functions of an expert in academic staff development.

2. General description of the scientific output

In the competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor”, Dimitrinka Binova Kuzmanova participates with a total scientific output of **34 works**, grouped as follows:

- ✓ Scientific publications in the relevant scientific specialty – **34**, of which:
 - ✓ Publications related to the PhD dissertation – **4**, which are not subject to evaluation in the present competition;
 - ✓ Publications with an impact factor – **1**;
 - ✓ Publications in peer-reviewed and indexed scientific journals – **29**.

The personal contribution of Dimitrinka Binova Kuzmanova to the **30 works** considered in the competition is illustrated by the fact that one is single-authored; in 4 publications she is the first author, in 3 she is the second author, and in the remaining 22 she is the third or subsequent author.

- Textbooks – **0**
- Teaching manuals – **0**

The candidate has also submitted information on participation with 21 poster presentations at international scientific conferences, being the first author of 3 of them.

3. Teaching activity

At the time of submission of the documents for the competition, Chief Assistant Professor Kuzmanova had 10 years and 10 months of teaching experience. The presented information demonstrates substantial teaching experience and active involvement in the education of students in the field of ecology and environmental protection.

Teaching workload

Over the last five academic years, the candidate has had an annual teaching workload of between 428 and 807 hours of classroom and extracurricular teaching activities, including between 120 and 342 lecture hours per year.

Her teaching activities are complemented by the supervision of 12 successfully graduated students, including 8 Bachelor’s and 4 Master’s students.

The candidate has no published teaching materials.

Developed curricula

The candidate has developed four curricula, three of which are included in Bachelor’s degree programmes and one in a Master’s degree programme. Two curricula are for the elective courses “Protected Areas” and “European Environmental Standards” within the “Ecology and

Environmental Protection" degree programme; one curriculum for "Protected Areas" is included as an elective course in the "Plant Protection" degree programme. The fourth curriculum is for the course "Forest Ecosystems and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources", included as a compulsory course in the Master's programme "Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Ecological Tourism".

4. Research activity

Main research areas

The presented scientific output can be summarized in three main thematic areas: ecological parasitology and biodiversity; parasite communities as bioindicators; and ecotoxicology/bioaccumulation of heavy metals. The main research focus is on freshwater ecosystems and the links between parasitology, ecology, ichthyology and ecotoxicology.

The studies have a clearly expressed ecological focus and are thematically consistent with the scientific specialty of the announced competition. The publication activity is quantitatively significant, while at the same time there is scope for further expansion of the range of international journals and scientific collaborations.

Citations and referencing of the scientific output

A total of 16 citations of the candidate's scientific publications have been presented, including citations in high-quartile international peer-reviewed journals, demonstrating the recognition of some of the obtained results in the international scientific literature.

Participation in research projects

Documents have been presented demonstrating participation in three research projects, one of which was funded from a source external to the Agricultural University.

5. Comments and recommendations

With regard to publications G20 and G21, I note that in the submitted documentation they are bibliographically described as publications in a "Book of Abstracts", whereas in the reference document demonstrating compliance with the minimum national requirements they are reported as Q4 publications. This circumstance does not change my overall positive assessment of the scientific output presented; however, I recommend that in the future a more precise distinction to be made.

I recommend that in her future research activities the candidate direct her efforts towards increasing the number of publications in higher-quartile international journals, expanding international scientific collaboration, and participating in externally funded research projects.

Considering her accumulated teaching experience and the curricula she has developed, I also recommend the preparation and publication of teaching materials.

6. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the candidate's teaching, scientific and applied research activities, I consider that Chief Assistant Professor Dimitrinka Binova Kuzmanova, PhD, meets the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, the Regulations for its Implementation, and the Regulations of the Agricultural University – Plovdiv for their implementation.

The candidate has the necessary teaching experience, presents scientific output with a clearly defined ecological profile, has an established citation record, and has participated in research projects. The comments and recommendations made in this opinion do not change my overall positive assessment of her academic activities.

All of the above gives me sufficient grounds to assess **POSITIVELY** the overall academic activity of Chief Assistant Professor Dimitrinka Binova Kuzmanova, PhD.

I therefore propose 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 Assistant Professor Dimitrinka Binova Kuzmanova, PhD, to the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the scientific specialty “Ecology and Ecosystem Conservation”.

15.09.2026

Reviewer:
(Assoc. Prof. Gana Gecheva)