



OPINION

regarding a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty "Ecology and Ecosystem Conservation", announced in the State Gazette No. 48/26.05.2026, with candidate Chief Assistant Professor Dimitrinka Binova Kuzmanova, PhD,

by Professor Diyan Mihailov Georgiev, PhD, Trakia University, Stara Zagora, appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury by Order No. RD 16-770/22.06.2026 of the Rector of the Agricultural University – Plovdiv.

1. Brief introduction of the candidate.

The candidate in the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty "Ecology and Environmental Protection" is Chief Assistant Professor Dimitrinka Binova Kuzmanova, PhD. She holds a PhD in the scientific specialty "Sheep and Goat Breeding", obtained in 2005 at the Agricultural University – Plovdiv.

Since 2015, she has been elected as a "Chief Assistant Professor" in "Ecology and Ecosystem Conservation", which marks the beginning of her specialized teaching and research career in the field of ecological sciences. Since 2010 to date, she has also successfully combined this with the administrative position of Expert in "Academic Staff Development" at the university. The entire professional path of Dr. Kuzmanova is closely linked to the Agricultural University – Plovdiv, as part of the administrative and, later on, the academic staff of the university.

2. General description of the scientific production.

In the current competition, Chief Assistant Professor Dimitrinka Binova Kuzmanova, PhD, participates with a total research output of 34 scientific papers, distributed as follows:

- Publications related to the PhD dissertation – 4 papers (which, in accordance with the regulatory requirements, are not subject to review in the current procedure);
 - Publications with an impact factor (IF) – 1 paper;
 - Publications in peer-reviewed and indexed scientific journals – 27 (out of 29) papers;
- For the purposes of the competition, 28 scientific papers are subject to analysis. The candidate's personal participation in them is characterized by the following distribution: first author in 4 of the publications, second author in 3, and a third or subsequent co-author in the remaining papers.

It should be noted that the majority of the works are co-authored with established and leading specialists in the field of fish parasitology, which makes it difficult to accurately differentiate the personal contribution and to define the leading role of the candidate within these teams.

Regarding teaching and methodological literature, the candidate has not submitted a list or electronic copies of published materials (0 textbooks and 0 laboratory manuals/guides), and therefore this indicator is not subject to analysis and evaluation.

Scientific activity is supplemented by a reference of participation in 22 international and national scientific forums. In this regard, an increased international participation is declared – 21 poster presentations at the scientific conference of the University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, as well as 1 participation with an oral presentation at a scientific forum in Bulgaria.

3. Teaching activity.

Chief Assistant Professor Kuzmanova, PhD, has nearly 11 years of teaching experience. The submitted documentation demonstrates an accumulated solid pedagogical experience and active engagement of the applicant in training students in the field of ecology and environmental protection.

Teaching workload of the candidate:

During the analyzed 5-year period, Dr. Kuzmanova has demonstrated high teaching, scientific, and methodological activity. The data on her in-class and out-of-class workload show stable volumes ranging between 428 and 807 hours per year, thereby meeting and exceeding the established academic standards. A serious testament to her teaching capacity is the lecture courses delivered, amounting to over 300 hours per year. The successful scientific and methodological engagement of the candidate is also impressive. Under her supervision, 12 students have successfully graduated. All of them have acquired the respective educational qualification degrees, distributed by levels as follows: 8 in the "Bachelor's" degree and 4 in the "Master's" degree. These results prove the candidate's professionalism in training young specialists.

Developed study programs.

The candidate has submitted an official reference for her participation in the development of 4 study programs. Out of these, 3 are intended for the "Bachelor's" educational qualification degree (EQD) and 1 for the "Master's" EQD.

- For the "Bachelor's" EQD: Two study programs have been developed for the elective courses "Protected Areas" and "European Environmental Standards" within the "Ecology and Environmental Protection" major. The third program is for the course "Protected Areas", included as an elective in the syllabus of the "Plant Protection" major.
- For the "Master's" EQD: A curriculum has been developed for the course "Forest Ecosystems and Sustainable Resource Management", which is established as a compulsory course in the syllabus of the "Sustainable Resource Management and Eco-Tourism" Master's program.

4. Research activity.

Fields of publication.

The submitted scientific production can be summarized into one primary research direction: "Ecology of Parasites and Parasite Communities". All investigated aspects of parasite transmission, as well as the studied possibilities for their application in the field of bioindication and biomonitoring, represent key subfields of this fundamental direction. The developed subject matter possesses a distinct innovative character, as dynamic

changes in aquatic ecosystems necessitate the implementation of modern approaches and more precise assessments across all topical and trophic levels.

Out of the presented 28 publications in peer-reviewed journals, 20 are in Scientific Papers of the University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest; 4 are in Agricultural Sciences (the peer-reviewed academic journal of the Agricultural University – Plovdiv), one publication is in proceedings from a scientific conference of the AU, and two are in scientific journals. Publications G10 and G18 are not related to the topic of the competition.

Publishing within a too narrow scope of scientific journals is not a strong indicator for a scientist, and it is necessary to expand international contacts, as well as the spectrum of specialized journals. This will inevitably lead to greater global recognition of the author and will increase the citation rate of her works.

Citation and indexing of the scientific production.

In the context of the previous point, 16 citations of the candidate's scientific publications have been presented. They are in international journals and support the significance of her publications.

Participation in research projects.

Documents have been presented for participation in three projects: two internal and one with external funding for the AU.

5. Comments and recommendations.

Regarding the scientific publications: The publications under indicators G20 and G21 are submitted with "in press" notes in the "Book of Abstracts" proceedings, accompanied by publisher confirmations. However, this does not justify their incorrect presentation as Q4-ranked articles. I would like to point out that abstracts in conference proceedings do not equate to full-text articles in scientific journals with a Q-factor.

Regarding the scientific strategy: Joint participations with posters at conferences and their subsequent publication in conference proceedings do not reflect the real development of scientific capacity. To demonstrate maturity, the candidate must redirect her efforts toward reputable specialized scientific journals, avoiding the practice of purely scientometric point-chasing through quantitative accumulation.

Regarding teaching activity: In connection with the accumulated teaching experience, I recommend that the candidate more clearly assert and develop her academic capacity. This can be achieved through the development and publication of original textbooks, manuals, and practical guides – both for the needs of the student audience and for a wide range of practitioners (parasitologists, ecologists, fish farmers, etc.).

6. Conclusion.

Based on the analysis of the publication activity, Dr. Kuzmanova has established herself as a scientist in the field of biomonitoring of water bodies, ichthyoparasitology, and the conservation of hydrological systems. With nearly 11 years of teaching experience,

she demonstrates high academic engagement and dedication to ecology and ecosystem conservation.

On the basis of the candidate's overall pedagogical, scientific, and applied research activity, I consider that Chief Assistant Professor Dimitrinka Kuzmanova, PhD, meets the requirements of the Act on Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB), the Regulations for its implementation, and the specific Regulations for its application at the Agricultural University. The comments made are of a constructive nature and are important for her future teaching and research career, for increasing the global recognition of her publications, and for the development of her expert potential.

My overall assessment of the submitted materials and the candidate's comprehensive activity is **POSITIVE**.

I 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 elect Chief Assistant Professor Dimitrinka Binova Kuzmanova, PhD, to the academic position of "**Associate Professor**" in the scientific specialty "Ecology and Ecosystem Conservation".

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City of Stara Zagora

PREPARED THE OPINION:

(Professor Diyan Georgiev, PhD)