



OPINION

**regarding a competition for “Associate Professor” in the scientific specialty
“Soil Science”, announced in SG no. 98 / 17.11.2020
with candidate Chief Assistant Dr. Violeta Stelianova Valcheva**

**elaborated by Prof. Dr. Miglena Kircheva Zhiyanski, appointed a member of
the scientific jury according to Order № RD-16-52 / 22.01.2021 of the Rector of
the Agricultural University – Plovdiv**

1. Brief presentation of the candidate.

Chief Assistant Dr. Violeta Stelianova Valcheva has graduated from the High School “Hristo G. Danov”, Plovdiv, in 1998. In 2003 she has graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Economics. In 2005 she obtained a Master's degree in “Accounting and Control” at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv. In the period 2006-2011 she was a PhD student at the Department of Agrochemistry and Soil Science and developed a thesis on "Influence of the content, forms and dynamics of calcium and magnesium on the acid-base balance in carbonate-free soils". She acquired the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (PhD) in the scientific specialty "Soil Science" in 2011 / Diploma № DR 007 / 24.10.2011 / from the Agricultural University of Plovdiv. In the period 2008 - 2011 she worked as Assistant, and since 2011, after a competition she worked as Chief Assistant in "Soil Science" at the Department "Agrochemistry and Soil Science" at the University of Plovdiv. Chief Assistant Dr. Valcheva speaks and uses Russian and English, which expands the scope of both to promote scientific production and to get acquainted with innovations in the field of her scientific work. Her additional qualification in mapping and GIS programs, as well as her knowledge of various statistical software products increases the competencies of the candidate for applying interdisciplinary methods and approaches in the scientific work.

2. General description of the scientific production.

In the competition for "Associate Professor" Chief Assistant Dr. Violeta Valcheva participates with 34 scientific papers in the nomenclature specialty. No impact factor publications are listed. The publications in peer-reviewed and referred scientific journals are 21, and the publications in conference proceedings are 10. Chief Assistant Dr. Violeta Valcheva included 3 publications related to the topic of the PhD Thesis, which are not subject to consideration in this competition procedure. No Textbooks are listed. In the category Manuals 1 /one/ product is indicated, which is not considered for assessment under this procedure.

The scientific works indicated in the Individual reference list of Chief Assistant Dr. Violeta Valcheva, cover the minimum national requirements for scientific and teaching activities for the acquisition of the academic position of "Associate Professor" (Appendix to Article 1a, paragraph 1) as follows: 35 (455.65 points), 10 refer to indicator B4 of Regulations for application of the law for development of the academic staff of the Republic of Bulgaria (169.5 points), 21 to indicators G7 and G8 of Regulations for application of the law for development of the academic staff of the Republic of Bulgaria (236.15 points) and the remaining 4 materials - 3 on the topic of the PhD thesis and 1 guidance form the other 50 points. The total number of points by groups of indicators is 505.65, with a required minimum of 400 points.

In order to prepare the opinion on this procedure, 31 scientific publications are only considered as a subject to present evaluation. Chief Assistant Dr. Valcheva has 3 scientific papers where she is a single author, and in 12 where she is a leading author. Among the other scientific works in 11 she is the second author, and in the other 5 she is the third or next author. I emphasize that most of the publications - 19 – are written in English. Chief Assistant Dr. Valcheva has participated in national and international scientific forums, preparing and presenting 5 presentations and 22 posters.

3. Teaching activity.

Chief Assistant Dr. Valcheva has 12 years of teaching experience in the Department "Agrochemistry and Soil Science" at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv. For the last five years (the period from 2015/2016 to 2019/2020), of which one year of maternity, Chief Assistant Dr. Valcheva has a total of 2,560.9 teaching hours of lectures, exercises and extracurricular activities in the Bachelor's and Master's degrees, which makes an average of 640 hours per year.

Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Valcheva is a co-author of a university textbook that is used in the school network (indicator E23 of Regulations for application of the law for development of the academic staff of the Republic of Bulgaria) - "Guidance for Exercises in Soil Science" (2017) published by the Academic Publishing House of the Agrarian University - Plovdiv.

The teaching activity is complemented by the supervision of graduates - 5 bachelors and masters, who have successfully defended their diploma works.

The materials provided for the competition prove with arguments of the fulfillment of the national requirements to the scientific and teaching activity of the candidate, related to provided classroom and extracurricular employment.

4. Research activity.

The research activity and the publications of Chief Assistant Dr. Valcheva complement the following areas, namely: studies and research on soil acidity in vineyards; studies on the specifics of terroir with regard to the establishment and cultivation of vineyards and certain perennials; studies related to the study of soil acidity in lavender fields.

The scientific production of the candidate is cited by the scientific community, which is supported by the mentioned 8 positive citations (group of indicators E). Most of them, however, are in unreferenced journals with scientific review - a group of indicators D15. Only one of the citations (D13) is in a journal, referenced and indexed in Web of Science.

The candidate participates in a total of 3 national projects, two with external funding and one with internal funding from Plovdiv University.

The presented evidence materials cover the minimum points of national requirements, and their review gives me a reason to give a good assessment of the research activity of the candidate and to emphasize that Chief Assistant Dr. Valcheva has the capacity to perform research tasks in the field of "Soil Science". The candidate has the necessary expertise and could be participant for work in research teams, which gives good prospects for continuing and expanding of her research.

I accept the presented list of the contributions where they are divided into two groups: scientific contributions - 9 and scientific-practical contributions – 2.

5. Remarks and recommendations.

To the scientific production of Chief Assistant Dr. Valcheva I have the following remarks and recommendations. The collective article "Effect of planting density of different maize hybrids

on crop growth and yield" from 2019 is listed in the List of citations, but is not included in the List of publications and in the table with the minimum national requirements, which I consider a technical omission. There are some inaccuracies in writing the titles of publications. When calculating the total number of points on the indicators for Associate Professor" it is incorrect to include points from previous procedures, in the case of acquiring the PhD degree. Chief Assistant Dr. Valcheva has the capacity to conduct high quality research and I recommend in the future to publish in scientific journals referred and indexed in the world-famous databases of scientific information (Scopus, Web of Science). This will contribute to increasing the citation rate of her work and to the wider dissemination of the results of her work among the world scientific community. I recommend the candidate to initiate and be more actively involved in projects, both national and international.

6. Conclusion.

Based on the assessment of the materials submitted by the candidate in this competition, I consider that Chief Assistant Dr. Violeta Steliyanova Valcheva meets the requirements of Law for development of the academic staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, Regulations for application of the law for development of the academic staff of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations of the Agrarian University for its application.

All this gives me reason to evaluate POSITIVELY the overall activity of the candidate.

I allow myself to propose to the Scientific Jury to vote positively, and the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Agronomy at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv to elect Chief Assistant Dr. Violeta Steliyanova Valcheva for "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty "Soil Science".

Date: 08.03.2021

Elaborated by:.....

(Prof. Dr. Miglena Zhiyanski)