

OPINION



Regarding the contest for an "Associate Professor" in the science major "Ecology and ecosystem protection", announced in SG no. 102 of 23.12.2022 with candidates:

- Chief Assistant PhD Maria Krasimirova Chunchukova and
- Chief Assistant PhD Plamen Ivanov Zorovski,

from the Department of "Agroecology and Environmental Protection" at the Faculty of Plant Protection and Agroecology at the Agricultural University appointed according to Order No. RD-16-245/ 22.02.2023 of the Rector of the Agricultural University - Plovdiv as a member of the scientific jury.

1. Brief introduction of the candidates

Chief Asst. Prof. PhD Maria Krasimirova Chunchukova	Chief Asst. Prof. PhD Plamen Ivanov Zorovski
<p>Born on November 11, 1981, in Yambol.</p> <p>In 2006, Chief Asst. Prof. PhD M. Chunchukova obtained a bachelor's in "Ecology and Environmental Protection". In 2007 she graduated with a master's in "Landscaping - exterior and interior design" at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv.</p> <p>In 2017, she received a doctorate from the Agricultural University - Plovdiv, with the thesis "Parasites and parasite communities of fish from the Danube River - ecology, biodiversity and bioindication".</p> <p>In her career, she successively held the following positions: a technical assistant at "Felikon 97" JSC (2008-2011), a technical assistant at "Intertorgo" EOOD (2013), an assistant at AU - Plovdiv (2013-2017), junior and senior expert at AU - Plovdiv (2017-2018), a chief assistant at AU-Plovdiv (June 2018 until now).</p>	<p>Born on March 22, 1981, in Knezha.</p> <p>In 2004, Chief Asst. PhD Zorovski obtained a bachelor's degree in general agronomy (agronomy - arable farming) at the Agricultural University. He graduated with a master's in "Plant production" at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv in 2005. During 2006-2009, he was a doctoral student at AU - Plovdiv. In 2013 he successfully defended his dissertation thesis, "Research on the biological and economic qualities of oat varieties concerning their use as a healthy food for humans".</p> <p>His professional development is related to the following positions: An agricultural technician and agronomist at the "Izgrev" cooperation, Knezha (periodically), junior and senior expert in the scientific research sector – AU-Plovdiv (2009-2011), an assistant at AU-Plovdiv (2011-2013), a chief assistant at AU- Plovdiv (November 2013 until now).</p> <p>Chief Asst. Zorovski has a 2-year specialisation in "Professional Pedagogy".</p> <p>Three certificates certifying participation in held training and seminars are applied to the documents.</p>

2. General description of the scientific publicity

Indicators	Indicator groups	Chief Asst. Prof. Chunchukova	Chief Asst. Prof. Zorovski
In the associate professor's contest, they participate with a total output of publications - a number of publications, grouped as follows:		34	42
• Scientific publications on the nomenclature speciality – pcs.		34	42

➤ Publications related to the doctoral thesis that are not a subject of consideration – pcs.	A	2 / (3*)	7
➤ Habilitation thesis - scientific publications (not less than 10) in publications that are referenced and indexed in a world- scientific database – pcs. (points)	B4	10 / (9*) (195)/ (165*)	10 (131,57)
<i>Publications with impact factor or impact rank - pcs.</i>		2 / (1*)	2
<i>Publications in peer-reviewed and refereed scientific journals – pcs.</i>		8	8
➤ Published book based on defended doctoral thesis for awarding educational and scientific degree "Doctor"- pcs. (points)	Г6	-	1 (30)
➤ Scientific publications in referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases scientific journals – pcs. (points)	Г7	22 (440)	11 (174,04)
➤ Scientific publications in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes – pcs. (points)	Г8	-	13 (70,82)
• Participation in scientific forums ✓ Abroad ✓ Bulgaria		17 1	14 5
• <i>The personal participation of the candidate in the mentioned publications is illustrated by the fact:</i> ✓ Independently – pcs. ✓ First author – pcs. ✓ Second author – pcs. ✓ Third or following author – pcs.		3 11 8 -	2 8 9 16
<i>Textbooks – pcs.</i>		-	-
<i>Study guides – pcs.</i>		-	-
<i>They are subject to analysis to prepare the opinion – pcs.</i>		31	35
<i>Note - corrections to the publications submitted by the candidate for participation in the contest are marked with (.. *). The publications based on the doctoral thesis are 3, not 2. A publication from the doctoral thesis is included in group B. If this publication is inadmissible, only 9 items remain in group B indicators.</i>			
<p>Chief Asst. Chunchukova, the presented 10 publications in group "B" indicators includes a publication-under number (B1), which was submitted to the list of publications related to the doctoral thesis (defended in 2017).</p> <p>I do not accept the inclusion of the publication (B1) in the documents for the current contest, as it is contrary to Art. 24, paragraph 1, item 3 of the Act on Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB) (2018), and accordingly Article 77, paragraph 1, item 3 of the Regulations on the Implementation of the Act on Development of the Academic Staff at the Agricultural University – Plovdiv ("..which do not reproduce those presented for awarding the educational and scientific degree of Doctor"). As a result, there is non-fulfilment of the minimum national requirements under group (B) indicators - Appendix to Art. 1a. paragraph 1 Regulation of the Implementation of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (RIDASRBA), PF 4.4. Earth sciences, group (B) indicators, "... (not less than 10)". Scientific works in group (D) indicator exceed the points for the minimum requirements in PF 4.4 Earth Sciences.</p> <p>Chief Asst. Prof. Zorovski. A publication is included in the reported impact factor papers, which is not in the other lists; no summary is presented for it. A book, "Production Technology for Sweet Corn", is included in the printed materials but not in the list of scientific works, and no electronic</p>			

copy is presented. The book can be used as a teaching aid. The scientific works in groups (B) and (D) indicators exceed the points for the minimum requirements in PF 4.4 Earth Sciences.

3. Teaching activity.

Indicators	Chief Asst. Prof. Chunchukova,	Chief Asst. Prof. Zorovski.
<i>Academic employment of candidates</i>	Teaching experience: 8 years and 8 months	Teaching experience: 12 years and 3 months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Both candidates are Chief. Asst. Prof. in the Department of "Agroecology and Environmental Protection" at AU – Plovdiv ✓ The presented certificates, issued by the Management of AU-Plovdiv, for the hours taken by the candidates during the period 2018-2023 ascertain: <i>both candidates meet the requirements for study employment</i> 	Chief. Asst. Prof. Chunchukova has a total of 3494 hours, incl. auditorium occupancy of 3072 hours (avg. year 614 hours)	Chief Asst. Prof. Zorovski teach 2463 hours, incl. auditorium occupancy 2023 hours (annual average 405 hours)
Both candidates meet the requirements for academic employment		
<p>Taught disciplines:</p> <p>Chief Asst. Chunchukova: conducts classes in 10 disciplines for 9 bachelor's majors and another 7 disciplines for 3 master's majors at AU-Plovdiv.</p> <p>Chief Asst. Zorovski: conducts classes in 3 disciplines for 2 bachelor's majors and another 2 disciplines for one master's major in AU - Plovdiv</p>		
<i>The teaching activity is complemented by the guidance of successfully defended graduates – a number.</i>	Bachelor - 6 Master - 9	Bachelor – 4 Master - 3
Published study materials		A book that can be used as a teaching aid.
Developed curriculums		
<p>Chief Asst. Chunchukova presented a list of 8 developed curriculums (4 bachelor's degree curriculums and 4 master's degree curriculums) in the submitted documents. In the additional provided materials, there were copies of 19 curriculums in 7 disciplines for 3 master's specialities "Biodiversity Conservation", "Organic Agriculture and Sustainable Nature Management", and "Ecological Tourism" and one curriculum in "Invasive Ecology" in English for the "Plant Protection" major.</p> <p>Chief. Asst. Zorovski presented a list of a developed curriculum, "Environment and Tourism", for the Master's degree program. In the additional provided materials was another curriculum, "Healthy and safe working conditions", developed together with Assoc. Prof. Ek. Valcheva. Chief. Asst. Zorovski participated in preparing a self-assessment report for the accreditation of 2 PFs - 4.4. Earth Sciences and 6.2. Plant Protection (certificated with an order from the Dean) and applied a certificate of participation as an expert evaluator of tests.</p>		

4. Research activity.

Chief Asst. PhD Maria Krasimirova Chunchukova	Chief Asst. PhD Plamen Ivanov Zorovski
Fields of publication	
➤ In the scientific contributions reference, Chief Asst. Chunchukova presented 132 scientific contributions in 32 scientific publications.	In the scientific contributions reference, Chief Asst. Zorovsk presented 26 scientific contributions in 35 scientific publications.

<p>The scientific publications of Chief Asst. Chunchukova are in the field of "Biodiversity of aquatic ecosystems".</p> <p>The scientific researches in a generalised form are in the following fields:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Pollution of the waters of the Danube River (1B, 2B, 3B, 5B, 8B, 1Γ, 2Γ) with some heavy metals and metalloids (Pb, Ni, As, Cd), accumulation in sediments and organs of various types of fish and their parasites. □ Biological diversity in freshwater ecosystems - fish, parasites and parasitic organisms of different types of fish (Danube River - 2B, 6B, 7B, 11Γ; Maritsa River - 4Γ, 5Γ, 7Γ; Osam River - 6Γ, 12Γ; Luda Yana River - 8Γ; Stryama River - 9Γ; Topolnitsa River-10Γ; Ogosta River-13Γ; Chepelarska River- 16Γ; Tamrushka River - 9B, 10B; Tundzha River - 15Γ, 17Γ, 18Γ; 20Γ, 21Γ, 22Γ; Srebarna dam - 4B; Bezbog dam - 4Γ; Batak dam - 3Γ; Panicheri dam - 19Γ.) <p>The main scientific contributions in generalised form are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ New data on contamination of water, sediments, organs in various types of freshwater fish and parasites with some metals and metalloids (Pb, Ni, Cd, As) in the Danube River. □ New data on species diversity of parasite communities in different freshwater ecosystems. □ New habitats and new hosts (fish) of some parasites and parasite communities have been proven: <p>New habitats of - P. laevis - Topolnitsa River; P. laevis and R. hellichi - Chepelarska River; N. skryabini, R. hellichi, R. acus, S. ephemeridarum and S. petruschewski - Tamrushka River and others.</p> <p>New hosts: Danube River bream - A. imitans, A. lucii and R. acus, P. incognitus and R. denudata; white barbel - N. skryabini, L. intestinalis, A. luci and C. microcephalum, B.rectangulum and R. Acus; Maritsa river - bream - isoporum, L.intestinalis and P. laevis, redfin - L., P. laevis and R. Denudata, perch - P. percae and A. lucii, etc.)</p> <p>Participation in projects: 4 scientific projects (including 2 national, 2 internal institutional) and 4 educational projects. She is the operational manager of one of the scientific fund projects of the AU-Plovdiv.</p>	<p>The scientific works of Chief Asst. Zorovski are in the field of "Agroecology".</p> <p>The scientific researches can be summarized in the following fields:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Biological farming and quality of the production - application of organic fertilizers for growing cereals (4B, 9B, 10B, 11Γ 1Γ, 2Γ, 4Γ, 5Γ, 6Γ, 15Γ, 16Γ, 18Γ, 20Γ). □ Application of soil and foliar herbicides in agroecological protection (1B, 3B, 5B, 6B, 8B, 22Γ, 23Γ, 24Γ) □ Interaction between ecological factors and components in agrocenoses (2B, 7B, 3Γ, 7Γ, 8Γ, 9Γ, 12Γ, 14Γ, 10Γ, 17Γ, 19Γ, 21Γ). <p>The main contributions in a generalised form are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Growth, development and productivity parameters of cereals, technical and economic efficiency of application of various organic fertilizers have been established. For the first time, data on ancient wheat varieties have been obtained. The effectiveness of using certain mixtures of soil and foliar herbicides in some agricultural crops has been confirmed. □ Phytotoxicity has been established for some herbicides on sweet corn. □ The application of some organic fertilizers has been shown to reduce phytotoxic stress from the use of herbicides. □ A correlation between environmental conditions and the development of some cereal crops has been established. □ Flowering grass strips have been shown to support the biological diversity of insect pollinators and the species composition of agrocenoses has been determined. <p>Participation in projects: 17 projects, of which 10 scientific (including 1 international, 4 national and 5 internal institutional), 6 educational projects and 1 infrastructural. He is the head of 1 national scientific project and operational manager of a scientific fund project at the AU - Plovdiv.</p>
Citation and referencing of scientific production.	
Chief Asst. PhD Maria Krasimirova Chunchukova	Chief Asst. PhD Plamen Ivanov Zorovski

<p>A list of 69 citations is presented, including 46 in scientific papers and 23 in dissertations. The presented citations in scientific works, 15 are from foreign authors and 31 from Bulgarian. 10 of the publications have an impact factor.</p> <p>I do not acknowledge citations in dissertations. There is no service note for a presented review of a publication in a peer-reviewed issue in the reference list.</p>	<p>A list of 21 citations is presented, of which 20 are in scientific works and 1 is in a dissertation. The citations in scientific publications, 10 are by Bulgarian authors and 10 by foreign authors. 6 of the publications have an impact factor or rank.</p> <p>I do not acknowledge the citation in the dissertation. A service note is presented for reviews of 2 scientific publications in a peer-reviewed issue, which are not marked in the group D indicators.</p>
<p><i>Both candidates exceed the minimum requirements for this indicator.</i></p>	

5. Notes and recommendations.

Chief Asst. PhD Maria Krasimirova Chunchukova	Chief Asst. PhD Plamen Ivanov Zorovski
<p>I have the following remarks about the candidates: In the preparation of the documents, both of them have omissions.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence for the developed curriculums and the reviewed publication in a peer-reviewed issue are not applied. • The points for the publications in which the candidate's scientific works are cited are not indicated (Reference-declaration of fulfillment of the minimum requirements). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the publications, as well as 2 reviews in a group D indicators, are not included in the reference list for the minimum requirements • No evidence has been applied for the presented list of scientific and educational projects.
<p>I have the following recommendations for candidates</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To attempt to systematise and summarise the scientific contribution in its scientific works - 18 pages with 132 contributions, in 31 publications on 16 "scientific problems", shows insufficient experience in summarising information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To popularise some of the positive results of its studies and scientific works to find applications as good practices in grain production.

6. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the pedagogical, scientific and scientific-applied activities of the candidates, I consider that:

1. **Chief Asst. PhD Maria Krasimirova Chunchukova**, according to most groups of indicators, achieves and even exceeds the minimum national requirements for acquiring the academic position of an "Associate Professor". In connection with the admitted violation of Article 77, Paragraph 1, Item 3 and Article 1a, Paragraph 1 of the RIDASRBA, in my opinion, Chief Asst. Maria Chunchukova does not meet the requirements of the ADASRB, the RIDASRBA and the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law for the development of the academic staff at the Agricultural University.
2. **Chief Asst. PhD Plamen Ivanov Zorovski** not only achieves but also exceeds the minimum national requirements in all groups of indicators for acquiring the academic position of an "Associate Professor", has pedagogical and teaching experience, and in my opinion, fully meets the requirements of the ADASRB, the RIDASRBA, and the Regulations for the implementation of the law on the development of the academic staff at the Agricultural University.

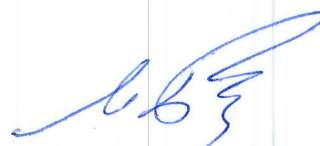
Based on the conclusion, the only candidate who meets the requirements of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff at the Agricultural University is Chief Asst. PhD Plamen Ivanov Zorovski. This gives me a reason to propose to the honourable Scientific Jury to vote positively and the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Plant Protection and

Agroecology at the Agrarian University - Plovdiv to elect Chief Asst. PhD Plamen Ivanov Zorovski for an "Associate Professor" in the science major of "Ecology and protection of ecosystems", PF 4.4. Earth Sciences.

Date: 26.04.2023r.

Plovdiv

Reviewer



(Prof. Dr Engr. M. Doncheva-Boneva)