



## STATEMENT

regarding the competition for "associate professor" in the scientific specialty "Ecology and ecosystem protection", announced in State Gazette, 102 of 23.12.2022 with candidates, according to the sequence of applications submitted, chief assistant professor PhD Plamen Ivanov Zorovski, Department of "Agroecology and Environmental Protection", Agrarian University and chief assistant professor PhD Maria Krasimirova Chunchukova, Department of "Agroecology and Environmental Protection", Agricultural University

by Prof. DSc Neli Hristova Grozeva, Trakia University, field of higher education 4. Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics, professional area 4.3. Biological sciences, scientific specialty Botany, elected 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 candidate.

**Chief assistant professor PhD Plamen Zorovski** successively obtained at the Agricultural University in 2004 the Bachelor's degree in General Agronomy, in 2005 the Master's degree in Plant Breeding, and in 2013 PhD degree. From 2003 to 2006, he worked as an agrotechnics and agronomist at the "Izgrev" CZPPK, Knezha, and from 2009 to 2011, he was an expert at the research center of the Agrarian University. Since 2011, he has been an assistant, and since 2013, he has been the chief assistant in the Department of "Agroecology and Environmental Protection". Zorovski speaks Russian and English. He was elected as a member of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Plant Protection, the Control Council of the Agricultural University and the General Assembly of the University.

**Chief assistant professor PhD Maria Chunchukova** successively obtained at the Agricultural University in 2006 the Bachelor's Degree in Ecology and Environmental Protection, in 2007 the Master's Degree in Landscaping - Exterior and Interior Design, and in 2017 PhD degree. From 2008 to 2013, she worked as a technical assistant at Filikon 97-AD and Intertorgo OOD. Since 2018, she is the chief assistant professor in the Department of "Agroecology and Environmental Protection". Chunchukova speaks Russian and English.

### 2. General description of the scientific production.

In the competition for "docent" **chief assistant professor Plamen Zorovski** participated with a total output of 43 works, including 42 scientific articles and 1 book, grouped as follows:

- Scientific publications on the nomenclature specialty - 42 issues, of which:
- Publications related to the doctoral dissertation - 7 issues, which are not subject to review;
  - Publications with impact rank – 3 issues;
  - Publications in peer-reviewed and refereed scientific journals – 21 issues;
  - Publications in conference proceedings – 11 issues.



The personal participation of chief assistant professor Plamen Zorovski in the mentioned 43 works is illustrated by the fact that 2 are independent articles, in 15 - is the first, in 11 - is the second, and in the remaining 15 - is the third and next author.

36 publications are subject to analysis for the preparation of the opinion.

In the competition for "docent" **chief assistant professor Maria Chunchukova** participated with a total output of 34 works, grouped as follows:

Scientific publications on the nomenclature specialty - 34 issues, of which:

- Publications related to the doctoral dissertation - 2 issues, which are not subject to review;

- Publications with impact factor and impact rank – 2 issues;

- Publications in peer-reviewed and refereed scientific journals – 21 issues;

- Publications in conference proceedings – 9 issues.

The personal participation of chief assistant professor Maria Chunchukova in the mentioned 34 works is illustrated by the fact that 2 are independent articles, in 18 - is the first, in 13 - is the second and in 1 publication - is the third author.

32 publications are subject to analysis for the preparation of the opinion.

### **3. Teaching activity.**

**Ch. Assistant professor Zorovski** has more than 12 years of teaching experience, and his annual workload averages around 500 teaching hours. The teaching activity is supplemented, according to the candidate, with the guidance of 20 successfully defended bachelor's and master's diplomas. He participated in the development of a new curriculum for the optional discipline "Environment and Tourism" for the Master's Degree program.

**Ch. Assistant professor Chunchukova** has over 8 years of teaching experience, and her annual workload averages around 650 teaching hours. The teaching activity is complemented by the guidance of 15 successfully defended bachelor's and master's diplomas. She participated in the development of 1 new study program for the optional discipline "Invasion Ecology" for the Bachelor's degree program and 4 new study programs for the Master's degree program.

### **4. Scientific research activity.**

#### **Areas of publication.**

The scientific interests of **ch. assistant professor Plamen Zorovski** are in the field of: biological agriculture (establishing growth parameters of ancient forms of wheat, determining the effectiveness of the application of organic fertilizers and products for biological agriculture); phytotoxins in agroecological protection (study of the effectiveness of soil and foliar herbicides, herbicide mixtures, influence of ecological products on herbicide stress), agroecology (studies aimed at protecting biodiversity and pollinators in agroecosystems, preparing basic topics in the education of young farmers to increase of ecological awareness in order to protect the environment) and the quality of the production (study of dependencies between some quality indicators of the grain and the yield, possibilities of applying ecological products to increase the quality of the production).

The scientific interests of **ch. assistant professor Maria Chunchukova** are in the field of: ecology and biodiversity, bioresources, biomonitoring. I will allow myself to point out some of them. Studies have been carried out on the concentration, circulation and bioaccumulation of heavy metals and metalloids (Pb, Ni and As) in water, sediments, liver, muscles and skin of dominant fish species from the freshwater ecosystem of the



Danube River, which have been included in 6 scientific publications. In another 6 of the presented scientific publications, the studies of the biodiversity of the parasite communities of *Abramis brama*, *Alburnus alburnus*, *Carassius gibelio*, *Chondrostoma vardarense*, *Leuciscus aspius*, *Scardinius erythrophthalmus*, *Silurus glanis* and their bioindicative importance for the intensity of the populations of intermediate hosts and the integrity of the food chains in the conditions of the specific ecological conditions of the Tundzha River, in the middle and lower sections. In 4 of the scientific works, the studies related to the ecology, biodiversity and bioindication of parasites and parasite communities of fish from the freshwater ecosystem of the Danube River are included. 3 of the publications reflect the research on the ecological characteristics and biotic indicators of the parasite communities of *Alburnus alburnus*, *Perca fluviatilis* and *Scardinius erythrophthalmus* to assess the state of the freshwater ecosystem of the Maritsa River.

*Citation and referencing of scientific production.*

**Ch. assistant professor Plamen Zorovski** presents 21 citations, 6 of which are in articles from journals with an impact factor or impact rank. He is the author and co-author of 3 scientific publications in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in Scopus: *Journal of Central European Agriculture*, SJR (2012) – 0.23, Q3; *Bulgarian Journal of Agricultural Science*, SJR (2020) – 0.248, Q3; *Journal of Hygienic Engineering and Design*, SJR (2021) – 0.16, Q4.

**Ch. assistant professor Maria Chunchukova** presents 69 citations, 10 of which are in articles from journals with an impact factor or impact rank. She is the author and co-author of 2 scientific publications in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in Scopus and Web of Science: *Helminthologia*, IF (2018) – 0.798; *Journal of veterinary medicine*, SJR (2019) – 0.164, Q3.

*Participation in scientific projects.*

**Ch. assistant professor Plamen Zorovski** has participated in 18 scientific projects, including 1 international, 6 national with the Scientific Research Fund - Ministry of Education and Science, 4 funded by Agrarian University, 2 infrastructural and 2 projects with external organizations.

**Ch. assistant professor Maria Chunchukova** has participated in 8 scientific projects, including 4 national ones with the Scientific Research Fund - Ministry of Education and Science, 2 funded by Agrarian University and 2 projects with external organizations.

## **5. Notes and recommendations.**

I have no objections to Plamen Zorovski and Maria Chunchukova.

I recommend both candidates to direct their efforts and publish their future research in peer-reviewed and indexed journals in the world-renowned Scopus and Web of Science databases.

## **6. Conclusion.**

Based on the analysis of the pedagogical, scientific and scientific-applied activities of ch. assistant professor Plamen Zorovski and chief assistant professor Maria Chunchukova, PhD, I believe that the two candidates meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, Regulations for Application of the Law of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations of the Agricultural University - Plovdiv for its application.



After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific works presented in the competition, ch. assistant professor Plamen Zorovski and ch. assistant professor Maria Chunchurova, analysis of their significance and the scientific, scientific and applied contributions contained in them, I believe that both candidates are worthy to hold the academic position of "associate professor". I positively assess their activity and allow myself to recommend to the management of the Agricultural University to announce another competition for associate professor in the scientific specialty "Ecology and Ecosystem Protection" for the candidate who did not receive a positive vote from the Faculty Council.

30.04.2023 r.

**MEMBER**  
**OF JURY:**.....  
Prof. DSc Neli Grozeva