

## STATEMENT

regarding the competition for the position of "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty "Ecology and ecosystem protection", announced in the State Gazette No. 94 of 05.11.2024 with candidate Chief assistant Professor MARIA KRASIMIROVA CHUNCHUKOVA, PhD

by Professor Stefan Ivanov Shilev, PhD, appointed as a member of the scientific jury according to Order No. RD 16-12/07.01.2025 of the Rector of the Agricultural University – Plovdiv

### 1. Brief presentation of the candidate.

I know Chief Assistant Professor Maria Chunchukova, PhD from my work at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv. She was born in 1981 in the city of Yambol. She graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Ecology and Environmental Protection in 2006, and in 2007, she graduated with a Master's degree in Landscaping - external and internal design at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv. She joined the Agricultural University - Plovdiv as an Assistant professor in November 2013, and in May 2017, she acquired the ESD "Doctor" in the scientific speciality "Ecology and Ecosystem Protection". In June 2018, she became "Chief Assistant Professor" in the higher education field of 4. Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics, PF 4.4. Earth Sciences, scientific speciality "Ecology and Ecosystem Protection", is a position she holds today. The candidate's work experience as a teacher is over 11 years. She uses written and spoken English and Russian and works with Microsoft Office and AutoCAD.

### 2. General description of scientific production.

The total scientific production of Dr. Chunchukova is 27 works. Three of them are related to the acquisition of the ESD "PhD", and with the remaining 24 she participates in the current competition for the position of "Associate Professor". All her scientific publications are in the nomenclature speciality, of which

- The publications with impact factor are 2 papers
- The publications in peer-reviewed and refereed scientific journals are 22 papers;

The personal participation of Assist. Prof. Chunchukova, PhD in the mentioned 24 publications is illustrated by one solo-authored publication, first authorship in 11 papers, second authorship in 11, and third in 1 publication.

According to *category A*, the candidate meets the requirements with a dissertation defence and its three publications. According to *category B*, **10 publications** are referred to in world databases, and **215 points** are presented. Dr. Chunchukova has also given **14 publications** in journals indexed in the Web of Science database. They are equal to **240 points**, and I assume the requirements of *category G* are met. In addition, **16 citations** of the candidate's publications are described, accumulating **80 points** by *category D*, exceeding the minimum requirements.

Assist. Prof. Chunchukova has not presented participation in the writing of textbooks and manuals.

**Twenty-four scientific papers** are subject to analysis to prepare for the current posture.

Dr. Chunchukova has participated in the presentation of 17 poster reports at international scientific forums and one oral report at a conference in Bulgaria.

The above regarding the candidate's scientific production shows that it covers, and by some criteria exceeds, the minimum scientific indicators mentioned in the applicable regulatory documents.

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

The candidate's teaching activity is related to delivering lectures, seminars, exercises and practices in the following specialities: Ecology and environmental protection, Plant protection, Agronomy (Viticulture and horticulture, Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture, Ornamental plants and landscape design, General Agronomy), Agricultural engineering, Ecology of settlement systems, Biodiversity conservation Sustainable use of natural resources and ecological tourism - the primary disciplines in which Assist. Prof. Maria Chunchukova has delivered lectures and practical exercises in the Bachelor's courses the following: Invasion ecology, Ecological parasitology, Ecology, Biotechnology and global ecology, Biological diversity and bioresources, Ecological monitoring, Biomonitoring and bioindication, Fundamentals of ecology, ecology and environmental protection. In the Master's Degree Program, lectures and practical exercises have been delivered in Green system, biodiversity, ecology and Conservation of freshwater ecosystems, Parasites and parasitic communities of fish, biodiversity and ecological risk, Aquatic ecosystems and sustainable nature management, Protected species in tourist areas, Ex-situ conservation and tourism.

Dr Chunchukova has delivered over 3400 teaching hours during the last five academic years, of which 1130 teaching hours were lectures, and 1176 were practical exercises. Her teaching activities are complemented by the supervision of 17 successfully defended thesis, 8 in the Bachelor's and 9 in the Master's degree. She has presented curricula development for one elective course in the Bachelor's degree, two elective courses and two mandatory courses in the Master's degree.

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

The research activity of Assist. Prof. Chunchukova is in the Professional field of 4.4. Earth Sciences, Scientific speciality "*Ecology and Ecosystem Protection*", where the following topics are highlighted:

1. Research related to the concentration, circulation and bioaccumulation of heavy metals and metalloids in waters, sediments, tissues and organs of dominant fish species from the freshwater ecosystem of the Danube River and their parasites;
2. Research related to the ecology, biodiversity and bioindication of parasitic communities of fish from freshwater ecosystems.

The candidate presents 10 citations of her works in journals with an impact factor, satisfying the minimum regulatory requirements. In addition, the submitted reference from the Agricultural University of Plovdiv shows that Dr Chunchukova has participated in two projects, "Student Internships", two under the National Research Program ", Young

Scientists and Postdoctoral Fellows", and two projects funded by the Agricultural University.

#### 5. Remarks and recommendations.

I have no objections to the materials submitted for the competition for Associate Professor. My recommendation is related to the need for the candidate to prepare a textbook independently or in co-authorship in the discipline(s) she teaches. My second recommendation is related to her published works. It would be good for the candidate to pay more attention to publications in journals with IF and SJR. This will help her to be more recognizable in connection with her future work, and considering the high competition in the PF of 4.4 Earth Sciences, it will increase her contribution to the ranking of the Agricultural University in the rating system of higher education institutions in Bulgaria.

#### 6. Conclusion.

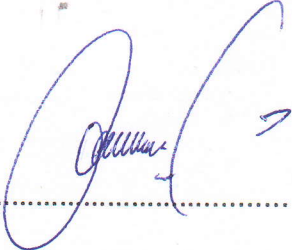
Based on analyzing the candidate's pedagogical, scientific and scientific-applied activities, Assist. Prof. Maria Chunchukova meets the requirements of the applicable regulation because she exceeds the required total number of points under the minimum national requirements for the academic position "Associate Professor" (585 points with a required 400 points) and the specific requirements under each category.

All this gives me a reason to evaluate her overall activity **POSITIVELY**.

As a result of the above, I would like to propose to the esteemed Scientific Jury to vote positively and the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Environmental Protection and Agroecology at the Agricultural University – Plovdiv to elect **Assistant Professor Maria Krasimirova Chunchukova, PhD**, as "**Associate professor**" in the scientific speciality "**Ecology and Ecosystem Protection**".

05.02.2025  
Plovdiv

STATEMENT  
PREPARED BY: .....



(Prof. Dr. Stefan Shilev)