



OPINION

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"Economics and Management" (Business Economics,
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Subject: competition for a professorship in an area on the higher education 3. Social,
economic and legal sciences , Professionally direction 3. 8 . Economics, scientific
specialty " Economics and Management (Agriculture)",
announced from **Agricultural University - Plovdiv**

1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate.

The competition for the occupation of the academic position "professor" in the field of higher education 3. "Social, economic and legal sciences", professional direction 3.8 "Economics (Economics and Management)" is announced for the needs on Agricultural University (AU) - Plovdiv in State Gazette, issue 62 of 21.07.2023. I participate in the composition of the scientific jury for the competition, according to Order No. RD-16-899/25.09.2023 of the Rector of AU.

In the contest participates only one candidate - associate professor Dr. Dimo Atanasov from the Agricultural University - Plovdiv. Through 2000 the candidate acquires a master's degree in "Agrarian Economics" at AU-Plovdiv. The candidate acquires a second specialty - "Professional pedagogy" from the Center for Continuing Education at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv. He gained serious practical experience in the period 2001-2005 in Ireland, where he worked on a large livestock farm - Alan Gillis Dairy Farm, Ballyhook, Wicklow, as a supervisor direction "Dairy Cattle Breeding" and "Animal Selection". *This experience complements his theoretical training with practical knowledge and skills useful for teaching work .*

After winning a competition, in 2007, Dimo Atanasov was appointed as an assistant in the "Economics" department at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv. He carries out his teaching activity in parallel with the development of a doctoral dissertation in the field of sustainable agricultural systems. In 2013, he successfully defended the ESD "Doctor" and was then appointed to the position of chief assistant. In 2015, he obtained his habilitation, after a successful competition for "associate professor" at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv. During the period 2008 - 2016, Dimo Atanasov was the coordinator of the "Erasmus +" program for the Faculty of Economics. In 2016, he was elected Dean of the Faculty of Economics, and in 2020 he was re-elected to this position for a second term.

He has an excellent command of the English language, uses Russian at a good level, which allows him to monitor foreign scientific achievements and good management practices and adapt them to modern conditions.

2. Fulfillment of the requirements for occupying the academic position.

The candidate meets all the mandatory conditions under Art. 24 of ZRASRB and the additional requirements of AU-Plovdiv, according to Art. 15, para. 1 of ZRASRB and Art. 60 of PPZRASRB.

Regarding the requirement for an acquired ESD "Doctor" (art. 60, para. 1, item 1 of PPZRASRB) - in 2013 Assoc. prof. Dr. Atanasov defended his dissertation work at AU-Plovdiv, on the topic: "Sustainable development of dairy cattle breeding in the Plovdiv region". He obtained the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management" (*diploma No. DR 27/17.01.2013*).

In regard to the minimum academic experience requirement (art. 60, para. 1, item 2 of PPZRASRB) - the total work experience of associate professor Dimo Atanasov as a teacher at AU is over 16 years and 5 months (*certificate LS 70/26.07.23*). Apparently, the applicant fully meets the legal requirement of a minimum academic experience of two years.

Regarding the requirement for a published monographic work (art. 60, para. 1, item 3 of PPZRASRB) - Assoc. Atanasov presented a habilitation thesis on the topic "Role of Innovations for the Economic Development of Agriculture". The work was reviewed by two reviewers respected in scientific circles, it was published in 2023 in Academic Publishing House, Agrarian University, Sofia" and has a volume of 121 pages. The topic of the monographic work, the object, the subject and the time period to which it refers, does not imply an overlap with the dissertation work and the monograph for the occupation of the academic position of "associate professor" of the candidate, which meets the legal requirement of Art. 24, para. 1, item 3 of ZRASRB.

Regarding the requirement to present other original scientific research works (Art. 60, para. 1, item 4 of PPZRASRB) - the candidate has submitted 19 articles and reports in primary databases such as Scopus and WoS and 5 publications in non-refereed editions with peer review. All of them refer to the period 2016 - 2023, which does not imply an overlap with publications from previous competitions for filling academic positions and doctoral degrees.

Regarding the requirement to meet the relevant minimum national criteria and the requirements under Art. 1a, paragraph 2; (art. 60, paragraph 1, item 5 of the PPZRASRB) - according to the presented Reference, the candidate has achieved a total of **1 412.76 points** (from indicators: A- 50 points; B-100 points; D-222.76 points; D- 675 points; E- 365 points), which significantly exceeds the required threshold of 550 points . It is noteworthy that activity was reported for each of the indicators, and for some of them, an implementation significantly exceeding the minimum threshold was reported - such as D (citations) and E (projects, textbooks, etc.). *This proves beyond doubt the potential of the candidate for the academic position and the enormous work he has done.*

In regard to the requirement that there is no proven plagiarism in scientific works (Art. 60, Para. 1, Point 6 of the PPZRASRB) - at the moment, such has not been established.

Dimo Atanasov is also a recognizable researcher with contributions in the field of agrarian economy and management. Assoc. Prof. Atanasov's comprehensive pedagogical training and activities show that he is an established and respected teacher in the academic community. His repeated participation in national and international forums is proof of his potential to develop and his desire to work to raise the image of AU-Plovdiv.

Based on everything stated above, regarding the versatile and in-depth teaching and research work of Associate Professor Dr. Atanasov, I believe that *he fully meets the quantitative and qualitative requirements* for occupying the academic position of "professor" at AU-Plovdiv.

3. Evaluation of teaching and research activities

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dimo Atanasov has a guaranteed teaching load in the disciplines: "Agrarian Economics", "Sustainable Development", "Eco-Economics", "Agrarian Policy", "Farm Logistics", "Economics of Precision Agriculture", "Livestock Economics". All these disciplines are taught in English with Erasmus students or other foreign students, as well as in universities outside Bulgaria. Its reported classroom occupancy for the period 2018-2023 is a total of 4 652.9 lecture hours (*official note NOR 5-25/27.07.23*). It is clear from the reference that during the last academic years his classroom employment was between 800 and 900 hours, therefore exceeding the mandatory minimum.

His scientific and teaching activity is complemented by the guidance of graduates and doctoral students. To date, it has more than 40 successfully graduated graduates, as well as 8 doctoral students. Three of the doctoral students have successfully defended their doctoral theses, one has been dismissed and 4 are active.

Associate Professor Dr. Dimo Atanasov has developed and accredited a new bachelor's program - "Bio Economy" and a master's program - "Bio Economy". Training on them started in the academic year 2022 - 2023. He participated in the development and implementation in the portfolio of the Agricultural University - Plovdiv of another master's program, namely "Electronic Commerce", in which he also started training students from the 2022 - 2023 academic year year.

Assoc. Dr. Dimo Atanasov is the head of two Master's courses, which are taught and already have successfully graduated students: "Bio-Economics" for Master degree; "European Agriculture and Rural Development" in English.

His active participation in project activity makes an excellent impression. Assoc. Prof. Atanasov has taken part in **10 scientific and educational projects**, of which: 1 national and 2 international projects with an educational focus and 1 national and 4 international projects with a scientific focus. In six of the projects, he is the head or coordinator of their administration and management. *The topics and activities of the projects in which he participates are directly related to his teaching and research work.* The high project activity gives reason to conclude that Dr. Atanasov has acquired sufficient experience and routine and *testifies to professionalism in his teaching work.*

Teaching and learning and scientific activity on Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dimo Atanasov like lecturer, author of numerous scientific publications, leader and participant in international and national projects and scientific manager of doctoral students, completely matches on the requirements for borrowing on the academic " Professor " position at AU-Plovdiv.

4. Brief description of the presented scientific works/publications

The careful familiarization with scientific production gives me reason for the following conclusions and summaries :

First, Assoc. Prof. Atanasov participates in the current one contest with sufficient scientific production , whose volume amounts to on *589 standard pages* . The relative share of independent publications is 8 %, and co-authored publications – 92 %, which testifies that the candidate for professor owns *expressed ability for teamwork.*

NO	Type of posts	Independent		Co-authored		Total
		Bulgarian language	English language	Bulgarian language	English language	
1	Monographs	1	-	-	-	1
2.	A book based on a dissertation	-	-	-	-	-
3	Studios	-	-	-	-	-
4	Articles	-	1	-	21	22
5	Scientific reports	-	-	2	-	2
6	Textbooks and aids	-	-	-	-	-
	Total:	1	1	2	21	25

Second, the publications of Assoc.Prof. Dimo Atanasov reveal his ambition to research current, complex and significant problems for modern science and business practice. His interests are mainly in the field of agrarian economy and innovation management. All of them are directly related to the disciplines of the competition.

On *innovation management* is dedicated his independent monograph "*Role of Innovations for the Economic Development of Agriculture*", in which Assoc. prof. Atanasov extremely collected and processed in good faith huge quantity information. Basic accent everything place on the main ones concepts for economic growth on the rural farm ; analyzed are European and national commitments for achieve on sustainable development; the role is rated on innovation and technological changes for social and economic evolution on agrarian industry; proposed are solutions and models for growth, in sync with modern " green " policies. The monograph *deserves high evaluation as from theoretical , as well as from practical point of view point* . It concerns a topic and issues concerning everything direct to the subject matter on announcements competition .

The analysis of the publications presented in the present procedure shows that they are distinguished both by relevance and originality, as well as by a clear methodological framework and professional interpretation of the empirical results. They do not repeat posts related to previous contests. As a whole, these scientific works reveal a deep scientific interest of Associate Professor Dr. Dimo Atanasov in the thematic area of the competition: economics and management.

Third, there are **24** publications other than the independent monograph presented in the competition. Of *these*, **19** have been published in the world databases Scopus and WoS, and **5** have been published in other international databases with scientific information. I positively assess the aspiration of Assoc. Prof. Dimo Atanasov to publish his works in international editions, as well as those in national editions, in English (about 88% of his publications are in English). *This greatly increases the potential of his work to become recognizable in international scientific circles.*

Fourthly, Assoc. Prof. Atanasov's active publication activity is combined with a high citation rate of his scientific publications. The total number of *citations is 66* , of which *thirty are* in the world databases Scopus and WOS, *three* in monographs and peer-reviewed collective volumes and *thirty citations are* in non-refereed editions . This information conclusively proves that the applicant's research achievements have *found recognition and public prominence among the scientific community.*

The representatives publications attest Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dimo Atanasov as *serious, conscientious, thorough and perspective scientific worker.*

5. A synthesized evaluation of the main scientific and scientific-applied contributions

The publications contain a number of scientific, scientific-applied and applied contributions with varying degrees of significance for agrarian-economic science:

- **Scientific contributions** include :
 - clarification, enrichment and further development of theoretical statements and concepts regarding the economic, ecological, social and technological features of agrarian production systems and the institutional conditions for their development.
- **Scientific-Applied contribution** include:
 - creation on toolkits for research , analysis and evaluation on the parameters in the work on the agrarian holdings .
 - methodology has been developed for evaluation on risk in rural areas farm which _ helps on the entrepreneurs Yes appreciate the factors creating risks for theirs business , yes undertake proactive (preventive) or reactive actions for minimization on hazards and warranty on sustainable development .
 - created and adapted are methodologies for analysis and evaluation on technical and economic efficiency on different technologies in the countryside economy .
- Applied contribution **include** :
 - application on the created ones methods in practice .
 - brought out are conventional and innovative policies for development on agriculture and rural regions in the country .
 - tracked and analyzed are transformations in Bulgarian rural economy through the transition to market economy .
 - defined are the main ones policies that have a positive impact or negative direction , as on the structure on agrarian industry, as well as on socio-economic and demographic changes in rural regions .

In summary, I consider the scientific achievements of Associate Professor Dimo Atanasov to be his personal work and can be attributed to the group of "enrichment of existing knowledge" and "application of new scientific achievements in practice ", as well as " obtaining new data and facts" for studied economic objects.

6. Key critical notes and recommendations

I have no critical remarks, but at the same time I allow myself to make the following recommendations for the future work on candidate a:

- In order to improve the learning process, I recommend that the candidate make efforts to develop textbooks and study aids for the disciplines that he will bring to the Agricultural University - Plovdiv.

These notes should not be taken as "criticism" and are not of such a nature as to challenge the contributions of the candidate for professorship. They are a collegial "recommendation" and "encouragement" on the occasion of the upcoming scientific events of Prof. Dimo Atanasov and his growth in the academic field.

7. Conclusion

Based on the above, I can summarize that there is a convincing application for the academic position of "professor" at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv. **Associate Professor**

Dr. Dimo Atanasov is a promising scientist, combining research with practical-applied activity, who has proven his achievements in teaching and teaching.

The competition documents testify that all the national minimum criteria and the quantitative and qualitative requirements of AU-Plovdiv for the occupation of the academic position "professor" have been met.

With full conviction, I give my POSITIVE evaluation and recommend to the other respected members of the Scientific Jury to vote FOR THE AWARD of the academic position "Professor" to Associate Professor Dr. Dimo Atanasov in the professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Agriculture)".

15.10.2023
Plovdiv city

Prepared the opinion:


/ Prof. Dr. V. Nikolova-Aleksieva /