



REVIEW

regarding the competition for the occupation of the academic position “**associate professor**” in the field of higher education: 3. “Social, economic and legal sciences”, professional direction: 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty: “Economic and Management (agriculture)”, announced in the State Gazette No. 99 of 21.11.2025 with candidate **Chief Assistant Dr. Krum Hristov Hristov** from Department “Economics”, Faculty of Economics, the Agricultural University - Plovdiv, Faculty of Economics,.

Reviewer: Prof. Dr. Violeta Dinkova Dirimanova, Agricultural University – Plovdiv in field of higher education: 3. “Social, economic and legal sciences”, professional direction: 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty: Organization and management of production (agriculture and subsectors) according to order No. RD 16-134/26.01.2026 of the Rector of the Agricultural University – Plovdiv.

1. Brief introduction of the candidate

From the submitted documents for the competition and from the curriculum vitae, it is confirmed that Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Krum Hristov holds a Bachelor’s degree in Agricultural Economics obtained during the period 2000–2004, as well as Master’s degrees in Management of Agribusiness Organizations (2006) and Accounting and Control (2007), all awarded by the Agricultural University – Plovdiv. During the period 2015–2018, the candidate pursued doctoral studies and successfully defended a PhD dissertation in professional field 3.8 Economics. In the course of his professional development, Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Hristov has continued to enhance his qualifications by participating in two certified seminars. One of them is related to social security policy and poverty reduction in developing countries, obtained at the International Center of the Ministry of Commerce of China in 2019, and the other is related to precision agriculture, completed at the Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia, in 2022.

Dr. Hristov began his professional career in 2007 as an expert at the Agrostistics Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food in Sofia. One year later, he became part of the team of the “Land – Source of Income” Foundation in Plovdiv, a non-governmental organization for public benefit. Within the Foundation, he provided training and actively consulted small-scale agricultural producers under the Rural Development Programme. At present, Dr. Hristov is a member of the Management Board of the “Land

– Source of Income” Foundation. Since 2010, he has been a lecturer in the Department of Economics at the Agricultural University of Plovdiv. Within the department, he delivers courses in various disciplines related to rural development, world agrarian economy, project development and management, project evaluation, agricultural economics, and others. The candidate also annually delivers lectures and practical classes in English to incoming Erasmus+ students.

Dr. Hristov has participated in 24 national and international conferences and in scientific research projects, the results of which have been published in scientific articles.

2. General description of the scientific production

In the competition for the academic position of **Associate Professor**, Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Krum Hristov Hristov participates with a total of 23 scientific works, grouped as follows:

- ❖ *Scientific publications in the relevant field – 23 items, including:*
 - *Publications related to the doctoral dissertation – 4 items, which are not subject to evaluation;*
 - *Publications with an impact factor – 10 items;*
 - *Publications in peer-reviewed and refereed scientific journals – 7 items;*
 - *Publications in conference proceedings – 2 items.*

The personal contribution of Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Krum Hristov Hristov to the 19 works under consideration is illustrated by the fact that 2 are single-authored, 2 are first-authored, 6 are second-authored, and in the remaining 9, he is the third or subsequent author.

- ❖ *Textbooks – none*
- ❖ *Teaching manuals – none*

For the purposes of preparing the review, **19 articles and a monograph** are subject to analysis.

The **monograph** related to the competition for the academic position of “associate professor” represents a habilitation thesis entitled “The impact of Structural Changes in the Agrarian Sector on the Development of Rural Areas in Bulgaria.” In addition, a **book based on a successfully defended doctoral dissertation** has been published. Although it is not subject to re-evaluation as a doctoral thesis, it contributes to the

candidate's overall scientific profile.

3. Main research directions in the candidate's scholarly work. Demonstrated skills or potential for leading scientific research (project leadership, attracted external funding, etc.).

The research activity of Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Krum Hristov includes studies in several main areas:

- Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and rural development;
- The role of small agricultural holdings in Bulgarian agriculture;
- Competitiveness of Bulgarian agriculture;
- Structural changes in the agrarian sector.

The topics of the scientific studies are highly relevant. The research is in-depth and falls within the scientific field of the competition. The methods applied are modern, providing solid prerequisites for obtaining accurate and convincing results.

Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Krum Hristov has participated in three international projects and one national project, as follows:

- UNIgreen University Alliance (2023–2026) – Erasmus+;
- CUPAGIS (2018–2022), funded under Erasmus+ KA2;
- NICOPA (2018–2022), funded under Erasmus+ KA2;
- "Innovative Models for Enhancing the Competitiveness of Agricultural Holdings in Bulgaria (AGROIN)", a national project funded by the National Science Fund (2018–2020).

4. Assessment of the candidate's pedagogical training and teaching activity.

His role in the education and training of young researchers.

Dr. Krum Hristov has 15 years of teaching experience at the Agricultural University – Plovdiv. He teaches students at both the Bachelor's and Master's degree levels. The courses he delivers include "Rural Development", "World Agricultural Economy", "Project Development and Management", "Agricultural Policy", "Agricultural Economics", "Economic and Mathematical Modelling", "Regional Economics", etc. A significant share of these courses is also taught to Erasmus students.

His teaching activity represents a set of tasks related to the education and training of students, in which modern teaching methods are applied. He uses interactive forms of instruction with both practical and research-oriented focus, and the course content is up

to date and aligned with the requirements of contemporary higher education.

Dr. Hristov actively participates in academic mentoring of students, as well as in the university's admissions campaign and in various educational initiatives and programs. His in-class teaching load (lectures and seminars) together with out-of-class academic activities is an average of 1114 teaching hours per year. He also actively and successfully works with young people at the university. Evidence of this is his supervision of 24 graduate students who have successfully defended their thesis projects. All of this represents an excellent attestation of his professionalism and his ability to motivate students to continue their professional development in the field of economics.

5. Significance of the achieved research results, as evidenced by citations, publications in high-prestige journals, awards, and membership in international and national scientific organizations, etc.

Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Hristov has provided evidence of five citations in scientific publications appearing in journals peer-reviewed and indexed in internationally recognized scientific databases such as Scopus and Web of Science. Of these publications, three are cited in Q2 journals and two in Q3 journals.

These citations refer to two of his scientific publications, published in peer-reviewed international journals. The citations have appeared in international scientific outlets indexed in globally recognized databases. This fact attests to the scientific significance and contemporary relevance of the candidate's research, as well as to the use and further development of his research findings by other scholars in the international context.

6. Significance of the contributions to science and practice. A reasoned assessment of the extent to which the candidate has a clearly defined research profile.

The research activity of Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Krum Hristov has both scientific-theoretical and scientific-applied character within the respective fields. His scientific publications are diverse and cover a wide range of topics.

The monograph proposed for review summarizes a large part of the scientific results of Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Krum Hristov for the period 2008–2025. The main topic is related to the impact of structural changes in the agricultural sector on the development of rural areas in Bulgaria. The monograph examines the effects of the

dynamic changes occurring in the Bulgarian agricultural sector on rural development in the country. In this context, the major global challenges, such as climate change and demographic processes affecting the restructuring of agriculture are presented and analyzed. The EU policies promoting new models of farm management and sustainable sectoral development. The monograph examines the mechanisms for balanced regional development and emphasizes the need for targeted adaptation measures. The practical value of the research lies in the proposals for the effective implementation of the instruments of the CAP in Bulgarian agriculture and rural areas. It also provides recommendations for improving the institutional environment for family farmers, strengthening their support and enhancing the socio-economic conditions for living and doing business.

- **Theoretical and methodological contributions**

In the proposed scientific works by Dr. Hristov, the following theoretical and methodological contributions can be identified across four main areas:

- In the field of "The Common Agricultural Policy and Rural Development", a critical analysis of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) following Bulgaria's accession to the EU has been conducted. An in-depth analysis of the impact of the First and Second Pillars of the CAP on rural development in EU Member States, including Bulgaria, has been carried out. Based on a comprehensive literature review, a methodology related to the distribution of direct payments by groups of farms and sectors has been developed. In addition, a methodological framework aimed at assessing farmers' attitudes toward the CAP and its impact on the agricultural sector has been developed and adapted.
- In the field of "*The Role of Small Agricultural Holdings in Bulgarian Agriculture*", a critical analysis of existing definitions of the term "small farms" has been conducted, and an original definition has been proposed. Furthermore, the main challenges faced by small agricultural producers in relation to the implementation of the CAP have been identified and outlined.
- In the field of "Competitiveness of Bulgarian Agriculture", a methodological framework for studying the competitiveness of the agricultural sector and its individual subsectors has been developed and adapted. An in-depth study of the key factors for enhancing competitiveness in sunflower production has also been conducted.
- In the final field of "Structural Changes in the Agricultural Sector", the relationship

between structural transformation and rural development has been examined. A methodology for studying structural and sectoral changes in agriculture has been developed, and various types of family farms have been identified and classified.

- **Scientific and applied contributions**

The scientific and applied contributions are clearly presented and thoroughly analyzed by the candidate. In the field of the **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and rural development**, various models for more balanced regional development and support for rural areas are defined. Clear recommendations related to the implementation of the CAP at the national level are formulated, with a focus on fairer, more targeted, and balanced support across groups of farms and sectors.

In the field of the **role of small agricultural holdings in Bulgarian agriculture**, a critical analysis of the consequences of limited access to financing for small farms is conducted, and possible solutions are proposed, including improvements to the institutional environment, recommendations for changes in procedures to enhance access to funding, and expanded financing opportunities for small semi-subsistence farms. In the third field, **competitiveness in the agricultural sector**, three groups of indicators reflecting the level of competitiveness in sunflower production are analyzed, and recommendations aimed at increasing the value added of this production are proposed. In the final field, **structural changes in the agricultural sector** are assessed, models for supporting family farms are proposed, and strategies for balanced regional development are outlined.

The contribution statement of Dr. Hristov adequately reflects the main strengths of his scholarly work. It demonstrates that in his research activity he is capable of applying appropriate theoretical and methodological approaches and tools, analyzing economic and managerial issues in the agricultural sector, systematizing research results, and proposing rational and well-grounded solutions with clear scientific and practical value.

7. Critical Remarks and Recommendations

I have not critical remarks regarding the materials submitted for the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor". With regard to the future work of Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Krum Hristov, I would like to recommend that he develop teaching materials for students in the disciplines that he teaches and continue publishing the results of the projects in which he participates in journals with an impact factor.

8. Personal impressions and opinion of the reviewer

I have known Krum Hristov personally since his time as a student and subsequently as my colleague in the Department of Economics. Working with him has always been a pleasure due to his integrity, dedication and professionalism. In my opinion, Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Hristov possesses qualities that characterize him as a well-established scholar—responsible, goal-oriented, and precise in his work—which are a solid prerequisite for his successful future development.

CONCLUSION

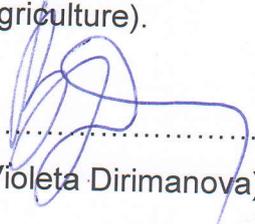
Based on the analysis of the candidate's teaching, research, and applied scientific activities, I consider that Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Krum Hristov Hristov meets the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB) and the Regulations for its Implementation at the Agricultural University – Plovdiv.

Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Krum Hristov presents scientific output, which in terms of its volume, thematic focus, and the quality of its scientific and applied contributions, enriches theoretical knowledge and supports practice in the field of economics and management in agriculture. His professional knowledge, skills, and personal qualities demonstrate that he is a very good lecturer and researcher.

All of the above gives me grounds to evaluate his overall activity and to recommend that the respected jury vote **POSITIVE**, and that the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Economics at the Agricultural University – Plovdiv to choose **Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Krum Hristov Hristov** to the academic position of **“Associate Professor”** in the scientific specialty Economics and Management (Agriculture).

Date: 12.02.2026

Plovdiv

REVIEWER: 
(Prof. Dr. Violeta Dirimanova)