



## OPINION

**From:** Prof. **Valentina Lyubenova Nikolova-Alexieva, PhD**  
University of Food Technology - Plovdiv,  
Professional field 3.8 . Economicsq Scientific specialty  
"Economics and Management" (Business Economics,  
Corporate Governance)

**Subject:** competition for **associate professor** in an area on higher Education  
3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction  
3.8. Economics, ("Economics and Management ((Agriculture)“ ),  
announced from Agricultural University – Plovdiv

### 1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate.

The competition for borrowing on academic position "**Associate Professor**" by area on higher education 3. "Social, economic and legal sciences", professional direction 3.8 Economics (Economics and Management (Agriculture)) has been announced for needs Department of Economics , Agrarian University (AU) - Plovdiv in the State Gazette, issue N 99 / 21.11.2025. I participate in the scientific jury of the competition, in accordance with Order No. RD 16-134/26.01.2026 of the Rector of the AU – Plovdiv.

In the competition participates only one candidate – Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Krum Hristov Hristov from the Agrarian University. The candidate obtained his higher education at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv, where he successively obtained the educational and qualification degrees "Bachelor" in "Agricultural Economics" in 2004 and "Master" in "Management of Agribusiness Organizations" and "Master" in "Accounting and Control" in 2007.

During the period 2015 – 2018 he was a doctoral student at the Department of Economics of the AU - Plovdiv. He successfully defended his doctoral dissertation on the topic "Opportunities for the Development of Family Farms" and in 2018 he acquired the ESD "Doctor" in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Agriculture)".

His professional career began in 2006, as an expert in the Regional Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry, Plovdiv, Department of Agrostatistics . During the period 2007-2008, he was an expert in working groups for the preparation of measures under the RDP at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in Sofia. Since 2010, he has been an Assistant, and since 2019 - Senior Assistant at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv. He teaches classes in disciplines related to the development of rural areas, agrarian economics, project management and evaluation. In parallel with his academic activities, Krum Hristov also works actively in the "Land as a Source of Income" Foundation, where he contributes to the social inclusion of minority groups in the agricultural business and to the sustainable development of rural areas.

*All of the above complements his theoretical training with practical knowledge and skills useful for teaching .*

## 2. Fulfillment of the requirements for holding the academic position.

The candidate meets all mandatory conditions under Art. 24 of the ZRASRB and the additional requirements of the AU-Plovdiv, pursuant to Art. 15, para. 1 of the PPZRASRB and Art. 53 of the ZRASRB.

*Regarding the requirement for an acquired ESD "Doctor" (Art. 53, para. 1 of the PPZRASRB)* - in 2018, Senior Assistant Dr. Hristov defended a dissertation at the AU-Plovdiv on the topic: " Opportunities for development on the family agricultural farms ". He acquired the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the scientific field 3.8. "Economics".

*Regarding the requirement for minimum academic experience (Art. 53, para. 2 of the PPZRASRB)* - Dr. Hristov's total work experience as a lecturer is about 16 years, of which 7 years as a "chief assistant". Obviously, the candidate fully meets the legal requirement for a minimum academic experience of two years.

*Regarding the requirement for a published monographic work (Art. 53, para. 3 of the PPZRASRB)* – the candidate has presented a habilitation thesis on the topic "Impact of structural changes in the agricultural sector on the development of rural areas in Bulgaria". The thesis was reviewed by two highly respected reviewers in scientific circles, was published in 2025 in the Academic Publishing House of the Agrarian University and is 179 pages long, i.e. significantly exceeds the required minimum. The topic of the monographic thesis, the object, subject and time period to which it refers do not imply overlap with the candidate's dissertation thesis, which meets the legal requirement of Art. 24, para. 1, item 3 of the ZRASRB.

*With regard to the requirement to meet the relevant minimum national criteria and the requirements under Art. 1a, para. 2; (Art. 53, para. 4 of the PPZRASRB)* - the candidate has achieved a total of **602.91 points** (from indicators: A- 50 points; B-100 points; D-282.91 points; E- 75 points), which significantly exceeds the required threshold of 400 points. This is evidenced by the section "National minimum requirements according to ZRASRB" from the submitted report on the fulfillment of the quantitative requirements for occupying the academic position of "Associate professor" at the AU- Plovdiv.

*Regarding the requirement that there be no plagiarism proven in accordance with the statutory procedure in scientific works (Article 53, paragraph 5 of the PPZRASRB)* - at the moment, none has been established.

Krum Hristov is a *recognized researcher* with contributions in the field of management and agro-economics . His numerous participations in national and international forums are proof of his potential to develop and his desire to work to raise the image of the University of Agriculture.

Based on all of the above, regarding the diverse and in-depth teaching and research work of Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Hristov, I believe that **he fully meets the quantitative and qualitative requirements.** for the academic position of " *Associate Professor* " at the AU-Plovdiv.

## 3. Evaluation on teaching and research activity

Senior Assistant Dr. Krum Hristov there is provided teaching workload by disciplines : "Development on rural regions", "World agricultural Economy", "Development and Management" on projects ", "Agrarian policy", "Agrarian economics", " Economics and mathematics modeling ", "Regional economics " both in the "Bachelor" and "Master " programs. In the last 5 years, the average annual teaching workload on Head Assistant

Professor Dr. Krum Hristov is over 1000 hours, which is performs the requirement of the PRASAU (Art. 64, Para .2) for borrowing on academic position of "Associate professor ". He was scientific leader on 24 graduates, with development on their Bachelor's and Master's degrees theses. Senior Assistant Prof. Krum Christ there is developed educational programs for all output from him disciplines, some from which are on English language.

Excellent impression does the active his participation in a project activity on AU. Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Hristov has taken participation in international , national and internal university scientific and educational projects , more important from which are : " Innovative models for increase on competitiveness on agricultural farms in Bulgaria (AGROIN)", funded from Fund " Scientific research " (2018-2020); " UNIGreen " - European University Alliance - Erasmus+; "Green Impact" - Erasmus+ KA2; "NICOPA" - Erasmus+ KA2; "CUPAGIS" - Erasmus+ KA2;

The high project activity gives reason to conclude that Dr. Hristov has acquired sufficient experience and routine and *evidence of professionalism in his teaching work* .

***Teaching and research activities on Senior Assistant Dr. Hristov as lecturer , author of numerous scientific publications and participant in scientific research projects, completely corresponds on requirements for borrowing on academic Position " Associate Professor " at the Agrarian University - Plovdiv.***

#### 4. Brief description of the presented scientific works/publications

The careful introduction to science production gives me reason for the following conclusions and summaries :

**First**, Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Hristov participates in the current competition with sufficient scientific production, whose volume amounts on 510 *standard pages* . The relative share of independent publications is 19%, and co-authored publications – 81%, which testifies that the candidate for associate professor owns not only *her hand expressed ability for teamwork*.

NO.	Type of publications	Standalone		Co-authored		Total
		Bulgarian language	English language	Bulgarian language	English Language	
1	Monographs	1	-	-	-	1
2.	Book based on a dissertation	1	-	-	-	1
3	Studios	-	-	-	-	-
4	Articles	-	-	-	16	16
5	Scientific reports	-	2	1	-	3
6	Textbooks and aids	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>21</b>

**Secondly**, Dr. Krum Hristov's publications reveal his ambition to explore current, complex and significant issues for contemporary science and business practice. His interests are focused on the challenges and opportunities of Bulgarian agriculture for sustainable development, with an emphasis on family farms, rural development policies and structural changes in the sector.

The monograph *deserves high assessment as from theoretical, as well as from practical point of view point*. It concerns topics and issues relating to is directly to the topic on announced competition .

*The analysis of the publications submitted in this procedure shows that they are distinguished by both relevance and originality, as well as a clear methodological framework and professional interpretation of the empirical results. They do not repeat publications related to previous competitions. Taken together, these scientific works reveal a deep scientific interest of Senior Asst. Prof. Dr. Hristov in the thematic area of the competition.*

**Third**, *seventeen* of the presented publications are in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in the global databases *Scopus and WoS* , and *two* of the presented publications have been published in other international databases with scientific information. I positively assess the aspiration of Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Krum Hristov to publish his works in international publications, as well as in national publications, in English (about 86% of his publications are in English). *This significantly increases the potential of his work to become recognizable in international scientific circles.*

**Fourth**, the total number of *citations is 5*, all in global databases like *Scopus and WoS*. This information proves that the candidate's research achievements have *found recognition and public prominence among the scientific community*.

The representatives publications and his participation in the project activity attests Senior Assistant Dr. Krum Hristov as *serious and promising scientific worker* .

## **5. Synthesized assessment of the main scientific and applied scientific contributions**

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

- An analysis of the impact of the CAP after Bulgaria's accession to the EU was carried out. An assessment was made of the distribution of direct payments, challenges facing producers in participating in investment support. Farmers' attitudes were studied and recommendations were made for more effective implementation of policies.
- A critical analysis of the challenges facing small producers has been conducted. Recommendations have been made to improve their access to support.
- Methodologies for assessing competitiveness have been developed, with a focus on opportunities for increasing added value in the industry.
- Trends in agricultural restructuring are studied. Models for supporting family farms and strategies for balanced regional development are proposed.

*In general*, I consider the scientific achievements of Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Krum Hristov 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. Main critical notes and recommendations**

I have no critical remarks, but I would like 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 teaching aids for the disciplines he will teach.

- I recommend to focus his efforts on leading a research project whose topic matches his long-standing academic interests.

## 7. Conclusion

Based on the above, I can summarize that there is a convincing candidacy for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the Agricultural University. **Senior Assist. Prof. Dr. Krum Hristov** is a promising scientist, combining research with practical and applied activities; who has also proven his achievements in teaching and learning.

The competition documents testify that all *national minimum criteria* and *the quantitative and qualitative requirements* of the Agricultural University for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor " have been met.

**With full conviction, I give my POSITIVE assessment and recommend to the other esteemed members of the Scientific Jury to vote FOR AWARDING the academic position of "Associate Professor" to Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Krum Hristov Hristov in the scientific direction 3.8 Economics (Economics and Management (Agriculture)).**

23.02.2026  
Plovdiv

Prepared the opinion:

*/ Prof. V. Nikolova-Alexieva, PhD /*