

STATEMENT

By Assoc. Prof. Anna Ganeva, PhD

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on the competition for occupation of the academic position „Professor”, in Sofia University “St. Kl. Ohridski”, Faculty of Biology, Department of Ecology and Environmental Protection

4.3. Biological Sciences (Ecology and Ecosystem Protection - Phytoecology)

1. General presentation of the materials received

In the competition for the academic position "Professor", announced in the State Gazette, issue 88 of 13.10.2020 as a candidate participates Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rosen Todorov Tsonev from the Department of Ecology and Environmental Protection, Faculty of Biology, Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski ". The materials presented by Assoc. Prof. Tsonev include all the documents necessary for the competition, according to the requirements of the Regulations of Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski " concerning terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions. All lists, references, inventories, scanned administrative documents are presented accurately and clearly, which makes it possible to trace their compliance with the requirements for holding the academic position..

The reference according to a sample for fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for the respective scientific field and the additional requirements of Sofia University “St. Kl. Ohridski ”is presented taking into account the requirements - both tabularly and as a bibliography and descriptions, and shows unequivocally that the applicant exceeds the minimum requirements.

The publications included as equivalent to habilitation work (section B of the table for fulfillment of the minimum national requirements) are six, in magazines with quartiles Q1 and Q2. The candidate has submitted summaries of these publications in Bulgarian and English, as well as summaries of publications outside the habilitation thesis, referenced and indexed in Scopus and Web of Science and book chapters (sections G7 and G8). According to the requirements, a reference to the contributions to the scientific papers from section B4 and those from section G is presented. The reference for citations contains a complete bibliographic description of the cited and the cited publications. The presented list includes 430 citations, more than half of which in publications referred to Scopus and Web of Science. As a lecturer, Assoc. Prof. Tsonev has published a textbook. He has

participated in 27 national and international projects related to the study of species, plant communities, natural habitats, protected areas and Natura 2000 sites.

2. General characteristics of the applicant's activities

2.1. Assessment of the candidate's educational and pedagogical activity

The teaching activity of Assoc. Prof. Tsonev began in 2002. as an assistant. Since 2010 he has been an associate professor at the Department of Ecology and Environmental Protection at the Faculty of Biology, Sofia University. Conducts lecture courses and practical classes, incl. teaching practices in the bachelor's and master's programs of full-time and part-time students. He is a holder of six basic courses in the field of ecology and environmental protection. He was the supervisor of 13 graduates. He has successfully completed one doctoral student, and currently supervises one doctoral student independently and is a co-supervisor of two others. These facts testify to the commitment and responsibility for the training of young people and the transfer of expertise and scientific knowledge - important requirements for any candidate for the academic position of "Professor".

2.2. Evaluation of the applicant's scientific and applied activities

The presented general list of publications shows the main fields of scientific activity of the candidate, namely ecology and biodiversity conservation. Assoc. Prof. Tsonev's research is related to specific species of flora and fauna in terms of their distribution and habitats, and their conservation status, as well as to the study of vegetation such as typology, structure, ecological specifics. However, his main scientific profile is that of a phytosociologist. A significant part of his scientific work is related to the classification of forest, grass, shrub vegetation, and the new data obtained are important not only for Bulgarian but also European phytosociology. Special mention should be made of the importance of revisions to vegetation types in Europe and a description of new syntaxa. For example, for the first time the forests of edible chestnut in Bulgaria were studied and classified, the forests dominated by black pine (*Pinus nigra* ssp. *pallasiana*) were studied, and the descriptions were included in the European database of Mediterranean and Sub-Mediterranean pine forests. For the first time, a complete, consistent phytosociological classification of the European marsh vegetation of the class Phragmito-Magnocaricetea has been made. A new for science union of endemic Balkan-Anatolian sub-Mediterranean shrubs *Genistion lydiae* is described, as well as three new associations belonging to it, which are widespread in Southern Bulgaria and Northern Greece. These are just some of the important contributions of Assoc. Prof. Tsonev for the development of phytosociology in Bulgaria.

The contributions in the field of floristics and faunistic studies should also be mentioned (establishment of new species for the flora of Bulgaria, new data on the distribution of species in the country, confirmation of the distribution of species of flora and fauna).

The studies of the types of natural habitats, included in the Habitats Directive and forming part of the target sites for protection in the NATURA 2000 network in Bulgaria, have a scientifically applied character. The in-depth knowledge and erudition of Assoc. Prof. Tsonev as a phytosociologist are the basis for successful developments such as the European Red List of Habitats, authorship in the Red Data Book of Bulgaria, Volume 3. Natural Habitats, Guide to Habitats of European Importance in Bulgaria. An important contribution to clarifying the diversity of natural habitats in Bulgaria is the establishment of two new natural habitats from Annex 1 of Directive 92/43/EEC: 8150 Medio-European upland siliceous screes and 8160 * Medio-European calcareous scree of hill and montane levels. The expert assessments for compatibility of plans, programs and projects with the subject and the goals of protection of the protected areas of the NATURA 2000 network, the developments in connection with the plans for management of protected areas are also of scientifically applied character. Assoc. Prof. Tsonev has an asset in the assessment of the ecosystem services of steppe-shrub ecosystems, of the supporting ecosystem services provided by the agroecosystems in Bulgaria.

The candidate has clearly and comprehensively presented the contributions in the scientific works beyond those from the habilitation reference.

2.3. Assessment of the habilitation reference

The contributions in the scientific works (habilitation reference) are presented objectively and comprehensively. Six scientific publications in the field of phytosociology and plant ecology are included, which bring new and significant scientific information about the classification and distribution of vegetation types in Bulgaria and Europe. The report on the contributions begins with an introduction, which very comprehensively and at the same time focused on the essential reveals the stages of the study of the vegetation in Bulgaria, the methodological approaches and the achieved results. Based on the analysis of numerous relevés, a revision of vegetation types in Bulgaria and Europe has been made, and when making taxonomic decisions both ecological and floristic gradients have been taken into account, which introduces a new element in this type of research. The object was oak, beech forests, coastal perennial grassy vegetation, coastal vegetation of the dunes, vegetation of the serpentinite areas, ultrabasic vegetation of the middle Balkans. The presented results and conclusions about the syntaxa - new and revised, the conclusions about their floristic and ecological specifics, the influence of the regional climate on the composition and structure of plant communities, the conservation recommendations - undoubtedly represent a significant scientific contribution.

The condition to submit abstracts of peer-reviewed publications in Bulgarian and English is fulfilled.

3. Comprehensive assessment of the applicant

The documents presented in this competition categorically present Assoc. Prof. Tsonev as an established university lecturer and research scientist. The presented scientific papers bring significant new knowledge, a significant part of which have been published in scientific journals indexed and referenced by Scopus and Web of Science. The co-authorship with established specialists in the field of phytosociology is a proof of a very successful international scientific cooperation of Assoc. Prof. Tsonev. His contribution in the field of fundamental and applied fields in terms of biodiversity conservation in Bulgaria is significant. In his research activity, Assoc. Prof. Tsonev has achieved an optimal balance between fundamental and scientific-applied research. As a lecturer at the Department of Ecology and Environmental Protection his contribution in teaching of students and young researchers is also significant.

Assoc. Prof. Tsonev has a clearly defined scientific profile, as evidenced by his scientific publications. Impressive are the consistency and precision in his research, in-depth analysis and raising new scientific questions awaiting resolution.

4. Critical notes

I have no criticisms of the documents presented in the contest in terms of form and content.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, as a member of the scientific jury, determined by an order of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski "(№ RD 38-569 / 03.12.2020) I express an opinion that the candidate **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rosen Todorov Tsonev**, participating in a competition for a professor in the professional field 4.3. Biological sciences (Ecology and protection of ecosystems - Phytoecology), announced in SG no. 88 of 13.10.2020 **meets the mandatory and specific conditions and scientometric criteria for the academic position "Professor"**.

25.01.2021

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