

Statement

by Prof. Dr. Georgi Radoslavov, Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Studies, BAS, elected as a member of the Scientific Jury and appointed by Order No. 70-08-79/ 30.01.2023 of the Rector of the SU "St. Kliment Ohridski"

CONCERNING: Competition for the occupation of the academic position "professor" in Professional field 4.3. Biological Sciences (Vertebrate Zoology, Geographical Information Systems) for the needs of the "Zoology and Anthropology" department, announced in the Official Gazette, no. 100 from 16.12.2022

In the announced competition, the only candidate is Assoc. Dr. Diana Peneva Zlatanova, who has submitted all the necessary documents in accordance with the requirements of the ZRASRB, the Rules for the Implementation of the ZRASRB, the Rules for the Terms and Procedures for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". The submitted documentation for the competition is properly structured and fully reflects the candidate's academic activity.

Brief biographical details of the applicant

Assoc.Prof. Zlatanova graduated from the Faculty of Biology of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in 1991 with a master's degree in biology with a specialization in "Ecology" in 1994. In 2010, she obtained the scientific and educational degree "PhD" in zoology with the topic of her dissertation: "**Modelling the suitability of bear habitats (*Ursus arctos* L.), wolf (*Canis lupus* L.) and lynx (*Lynx lynx* L.) in Bulgaria**". Assoc.Prof. Zlatanova has over 32 years of work experience in the specialty in zoology at Sofia University, the majority of which are in an academic position. Her scientific career at the Faculty of Biology of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" started in 2011 as the main assistant at the Department of "Zoology and Anthropology". In 2016, she acquired the academic position of " Assoc.Prof. " in vertebrate zoology in the same department. It can be noted that Assoc. Prof. Zlatanova has an international post-graduate qualification in the management of Balkan local fauna, as well as several international certificates. The candidate's career growth and professional qualifications fully correspond to the subject of the announced competition for a professor in the Department of Zoology and Anthropology.

Evaluation of the scientific and teaching activity of the candidate

Teaching and learning activity. Assoc.Prof. Zlatanova's teaching activity is voluminous, including leading various lecture courses and learning practices for students (full-time and part-time) from various specialties, bachelor's and master's studies at the Faculty of Biology of Sofia University. Assoc.Prof. Zlatanova's lecture courses are directly related to her professional competence - Vertebrate Zoology, Principles of captive breeding and breeding of wild animals, Vertebrate Zoology, Conservationally significant vertebrates in agroecosystems, etc. (over 808 hours in the last 5 years), as well as teaching practices in vertebrate zoology and biodiversity (56 hours). Assoc.Prof. Zlatanova was the supervisor of 10 graduate students (bachelor's and master's degrees), as well as the scientific supervisor of six doctoral students, of whom 2 defended, 2 dismissed with the right to defend, and 2 in the process of training.

In conclusion, the general teaching and learning activity of Associate Professor Diana Zlatanova is significant in importance, considering its large volume and diverse directions and topics.

Research activity. The main part of Assoc.Prof. Zlatanova's research can be structured in three directions: 1). Studying the relationships of mammals with other species (predation, competition or cooperation); 2). Behavioral aspects of mammals related to assimilation and use of habitat resources and avoidance of threats; 3) Testing new approaches to the study of species diversity.

The results of these studies are reflected in the candidate's high publication activity, the development of a large number of international and national scientific research projects, the preparation of action plans for species and management plans for protected areas, as well as high review activity. Prof. Zlatanova has over 90 scientific works (scientific articles, published conference reports, book chapters and teaching aids), with over 3000 citations, which is an indicator of the relevance and significance of the candidate's scientific fields.

Assoc.Prof. Zlatanova participated in the current competition for a professor with a total of 19 scientific publications in national and international scientific publications, referenced and indexed in WoS/SCOPUS and 3 book chapters. The articles are distributed by quartiles as follows: Q1 - 2 articles, Q2 - 3 articles, Q3 - 4 articles and Q4 - 10 articles. In 2 of the 19 scientific articles presented for the competition, Prof. Zlatanova is the first author, and in 6 publications the last author, which determines the leading role of the candidate. The co-authorship in scientific works with colleagues of national and international scale shows that Associate Professor Zlatanova is a well-established and sought-after specialist in the areas she develops. Prof. Zlatanova participated

in 14 national and 2 international projects, of which she was the leader of four of them. The strongest argument for the importance of published scientific works is their citability. The candidate has over 3,000 citations, 2,393 and 2,275 of which are in publications referenced and indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, respectively, h-index: 8 (Scopus).

The scientific directions developed by Associate Professor Diana Zlatanova are up-to-date and have significant scientific and scientifically applied value. The studies used modern and diverse methods of analysis, some of which were innovative in nature. The review of the presented scientific works gives me reason to assume that the candidate has a clear profile and significant participation in the conduct of research.

Conclusion:

On the basis of the presented reference regarding the overall educational, teaching and research activity of Assoc. Dr. Diana Zlatanova, I consider that she fully meets the requirements for occupying the academic position of "professor" according to the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for implementation of the ZRASRB, as well as the Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Sufficiently convincing evidence of her teaching, scientific activity and high citation rate is presented. This gives me the reason, as a member of the Scientific Jury for the announced competition appointed by order No. 70-08-79 from 30.01.2023 of the Rector of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", to give a high evaluation of the scientific production and recommend to the members of the scientific jury to vote positively for the election of Assoc.Prof. Dr. Diana Zlatanova to the academic position of "professor" in the professional direction 4.3. Biological Sciences "Zoology and Anthropology".

07.04.2023

Prepared the statement:


/ Prof. Georgi Radoslavov /