

STATEMENT

Written by: **Assoc. Prof. Stefka Krumova Ivanova, PhD**

Head of National Reference Laboratory “Measles, Mumps, Rubella”, Department Virology, National Centre of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases (NCIPD), member of a scientific jury, determined by the order of the Rector of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", № RD-38-609/14.11.2023

By competition for the academic position "**Associate Professor**" in the field of higher education, professional direction: 4.3. Biological sciences (Virology - molecular virology), for the needs of the SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", published in the Official Gazette, no. 86, 13.10.2023

I declare that I have no co-authored publications and no conflict of interest with the candidate and I am not a related person, in the sense of para 1, item 3 and 5 of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA).

1. Submitted materials for the competition.

The materials provided for my opinion are from Anton Veselinov Hinkov, PhD, the only candidate participating in the competition. The documents are in accordance with the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (part 3, item 24-26), the Regulations and item 109 (2) from the Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski".

The materials for the contest are perfectly systematized and include: a curriculum vitae; copies of diplomas for completed higher education - Master's Degree and for PhD; certificate of work experience in the specialty and continuing employment contract with SU "St. Kliment Ohridski"; list/reference of scientific publications; participation in scientific projects and scientific contributions in the specialty; participation in scientific forums; a table with the covered required points by group of indicators according to the national criteria for acquiring

the academic position "Associate Professor"; citation reference; reference for educational employment; author reference for scientific contributions and also medical certificate and criminal record certificate.

2. Analysis of the candidate's professional and academic development

Anton Veselinov Hinkov, PhD, was born on 14.12.1981 in the city of Sofia. He graduated with a master's degree, majoring in "Molecular Biology" in 2006 at the SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of Biology and PhD in 2012 with the topic of his dissertation: "*Investigation of newly synthesized stychylquinolines for Anti-HIV-1 activity in cell culture*". His professional development is entirely related to the field of virology (study of the mechanism of antiviral activities of materials of natural and synthetic origin and medical virology), working as a specialist virologist, assistant and chief assistant at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of Biology. Since 2020 chief assistant Hinkov is a member of the Quality Commission of the Faculty of Biology, SU "St. Kliment Ohridski".

The preparation of PhD, its growth to ch. assistant, the candidate's active teaching and research activities and entirely in SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" are evidence of upward professional development and aspiration for academic enrichment.

3. Evaluation of the candidate's scientific works.

The documentation provided to me from Anton Veselinov Hinkov, PhD, is correctly formatted, including summary lists and comprehensive evidentiary material for them. It covers the candidate's research activity during his work at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" for the period 2010 - 2023, or a total of 32 scientific works (of them 23 in journals referenced in Web of Science, SCOPUS or in journals with IF and SJR-factor), of which 17 are selectively presented for this competition and are in foreign quartile journals. The total calculated Impact Factor is 45,892. Ten of his publications are in Q1 journals, four in Q2, seven in Q3, and five in Q4. In ten of the publications he is the first or second author, which shows his leading role in their preparation.

The presented citations of publications in international systems, including Scopus or Web of Science, are 101, the main part being in the last 5 years. This undeniably confirms the importance of the scientific works of the candidates and their knowledge from international collectives and renowned journals in the field of virology and medicine.

Participation in scientific conferences and congresses is a total of 43.

The project activity of Anton Hinkov, PhD is expressed in participation in 13 scientific research projects, financed by the Ministry of Education and Science, SU "St. Kliment

Ohridski" and Medical University. The latter confirms his affinity for science and expert activity in conducting research to establish and clarify the mechanism of antiviral activities of materials of natural and synthetic origin.

4. Contributions from scientific research activity.

The main directions in the scientific developments of Dr. Anton Hinkov are related to the study of the antiviral effect of various physical and biological factors and have a completely scientific and fundamental nature. Thematically, they are grouped into three categories, namely:

- **Investigation of antiviral activity of natural products** - screening of natural products (substances isolated from lower and higher plants, invertebrates and microorganisms) for antiviral activity. A range of strains of human herpes virus type 1, human herpes virus type 2, and an acyclovir-resistant strain of human herpes virus type 2 were used in the antiviral experiments.
- **Investigation of new synthetic compounds for the presence of anti-herpes effect** - In the course of the candidate's research, it was found that the Phe-Pro dihydroxyethylene isostere can be used for the synthesis of HIV-1 protease inhibitors; Gly-ABC (newly synthesized ester of Abacavir) showed low cytotoxicity and high anti-HIV-1 activity in MT-4 cells; in the therapy of herpes viruses, modified nucleoside analogues can be used.
- **Investigation of the impact of physical factors on the replication and extracellular virions of BHC 1** - For the first time worldwide, the impact of nutrient medium and water treated with surface wave non-equilibrium gas discharge plasma (constructed by a Bulgarian team of scientists) for antiviral and virucidal action has been studied.

5. Evaluation of teaching activity.

Dr. Anton Hinkov as part of the team of the Laboratory "Virology", BF, SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", is an established teacher with proven experience in the training of students, specialist virologists in the country. He gives lectures on Microbiology with Virology to students majoring in "Pharmacy"; practical exercises and teaching practices in "Molecular Virology", "Virology" and "Microbiology with Virology". He is the academic supervisor of 13 graduates who have successfully defended their diplomas.

An impression is made by the huge teaching employment of the candidate, according

to the Information on academic employment provided by SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", namely e 2 228,7 hours of study time and 1 503,5 hours of classroom engagement.

6. General assessment of the applicant's compliance with the mandatory requirements of the DASRBA.

According to the provided table with the covered required points by group of indicators from the national criteria for acquiring the academic position "Associate Professor", Anton Hinkov, PhD fully covers the specified criteria. The required minimum is 400 points, and the candidate collects 412 points. This, in combination with his active teaching and impressive scientific activity, absolutely confirms the suitability of the candidate for the academic position "Associate Professor".

7. Conclusion.

The assessment of the overall career development, research, organizational-methodical and teaching activities of Anton Veselinov Hinkov, Ph.D., shows that the candidate fully meets the criteria of DASRBA and the requirements of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria of the University of St. Kliment Ohridski" for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty " Virology". His professional path is an example of consistent, purposeful and thorough development in the field of virology. My opinion is that Anton Hinkov, PhD is a well-established scientist and successful teacher with great potential for future research growth in the field of medical virology and molecular biology.

I am pleased to offer the esteemed jury to choose Anton Veselinov Hinkov, Ph.D., for the academic position "Associate Professor" in "Virology" at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Data: 05.02.2024

Signature:

Associate Professor Stefka Krumova Ivanova,
PhD