

STATEMENT

REGARDING: Competition for the academic position "Associate professor" in Professional field 4.3. Biological sciences, specialty *General Microbiology* –

FROM: Prof. Dr. Svetla Danova, DSc., Department of General Microbiology, Stephan Angeloff Institute of Microbiology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

1. REGARDING THE COMPETITION:

The competition for Associate Professor (with specialization in *General Microbiology – Phyto-pathogenic bacteria*) was announced in State Gazette No. 55/28.06.2024 on the basis of Art. 4 and Art. 25 of ZRASRB, art. 57 para. (1) and para. (2) of the Regulations of the Low (ZRASRB) and Art. 106 para. (1) and Art. 108 para. (1) and para. (2) of the Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". The scientific jury was assigned by order No. RD-38-468/22.07.24 of the Dean of the Faculty of Biology (BF) on the basis of a decision of the Faculty Council (protocol No. 12 of 16.07.2024), for the needs of the Department of "General and Applied microbiology" - BF.

As a member of this jury, I declare that I have no joint publications, projects or conflict of interest of any other nature within the meaning of para. 1 items 3 and 5 of the ZRASRB with the evaluated candidate in the competition.

2. BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT THE CANDIDATE IN THE COMPETITION

The only candidate in the contest ch. assistant YOANA KRASIMIROVA KIZHEVA, has a proven interest in the professional field of Biological Sciences. She graduated from the Biology profile at the Academy of Science and Mathematics High School "Acad. Nikola Obreshkov", Burgas. From 2003 to 2007, he studied in the Bachelor's program "Biology and Chemistry" (BF-SU), with a teacher's diploma in Biology and Chemistry. In 2010, she graduated with honors (5.90) as a molecular biologist- with a Master degree in Microbiology with Microbiological Control, at the Biology faculty of SU. The candidate's interest in phytopathogens began with the excellently presented diploma thesis on the topic: "*Diversity of phytopathogenic bacteria of the genus Burkholderia*". Dr. Kizheva achieved a kind of upgrade of these studies in the third degree of higher education. Received ONS "Doctor" with public defense on 04/30/2014 in the field of Higher education 4.3. *Biological Sciences - Microbiology*. Her academic and career began in 2015 as a part-time assistant in the Department of

Microbiology of the BF-SU and she conducts practical classes and lectures for students studying at the Bachelor's and Master's Colleges.

3. FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ACADEMIC POSITION "ASSOCIANT PROFESSOR"

The candidate for the academic position "*Associate Professor*" in the competition submits all the necessary documents in accordance with the requirements of ZRASRB and the Regulations thereto. The documents are very well prepared, arranged and reflect all aspects of teaching, training and scientific research activities with their results. The scientific production of **18 publications** in refereed journals (international and national), over 40 participations in conferences and seminars, their abstracts prove academic growth and professional preparation according to the requirements of the low-ZRASRB. A kind of proof of which is **the citations** - presented: **136 citations** (submitted in the Authors' system); of which in **Scopus - 82 citations** and **127 in Google Scholar**, which precisely supplement the information about the evaluation of the scientific works of the candidate in the thematic area of the announced competition. in accordance with the announced competition.

3.1. Fulfillment of the minimum national requirements according to the low-ZRASRB and the its Regulations

The most accurate assessment of the individual indicators for holding the position of "*associate professor*" can be seen from a duly and systematized performance presented. From the documents submitted for the competition it is clear that the Chief. Assist. Ioana Kizheva meets and exceeds the minimum national requirements as follows:

According to indicator A - 50 points. The candidate received the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (on 4.3. Biological sciences-Microbiology), successfully defending a dissertation on the topic: "*Phytopathogenic bacteria of the genus Xanthomonas from Solanum lycopersicum*" at BF-SU (Diploma no. SU 2014-50/15.05.2014).

According to indicator 4, in group B, 4 publications are presented, for the period 2021-2024, published in international authoritative journals with **Q1 - 100 items**.

According to indicator 7, in group D, 14 scientific works published in international journals with impact rank are indicated, as follows: **Q2 – 4 papers; Q3-7; Q4- 3.** They form a **total of 221 points** out of the required **200 points**. All scientific works are co-authored, and in 8 of them Dr. Kizheva is the first author. This is indisputable proof of her important role in developments and readiness as a qualified teacher to develop specific scientific topics.

According to indicator 11 in group D: 196 items (with only 50 items needed), formed by the high number of citations -98 in Scopus and Web of Science. This proves that the works are highly appreciated by the wide scientific community in Bulgaria and abroad.

3.2. Fulfillment of the university requirements for holding the position of "Associate Professor", according to the Regulations of BF-SU "Kl. Ohridski", in accordance with ZRASRB.

The submitted references under Art. 105 and the reference for the additional indicators under Art. 112, para. 2 of the Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" convincingly prove the fulfillment of the University requirements for "Assoc. Prof". Dr. Kizheva presents Diploma for ONS Doctor in 4.3. Biological Sciences - Microbiology and she has 9 years of professional experience as a university teacher. She started as a part-time assistant in 2015 and 2016, and from 02.2017 she was appointed to the position of Chief Assistant in the department for whose needs the competition was announced. It exceeds the requirement of at least 2 years of professional experience, evident from the Certificate for 9 years of teaching in the Faculty of Arts of the SU.

- ***Teaching activity and work with students and graduates:***

The reference shows extensive teaching experience in 12 microbiological disciplines - practical classes for OKS Bachelor and Master, from the specialties of Molecular Biology, Biomanagement and Sustainable Development; Biology and Chemistry; Ecology and environmental protection; Food quality and safety. Dr. Yoana Kizheva leads lectures on the disciplines Sanitary microbiology of cosmetic and pharmaceutical products; Phytopathogenic bacteria and Microbiology and virology for OCS Master - Microbiology and microbiological control. Evidence of full classroom employment for the academic years, in the capacity of both part-time and assistant/principal assistant, has been presented, as follows: academic year 2022/2023 -678.4 hours, of which 421.4 hours are classroom employment; for 2021/2022 - 660.8 hours, of which 395.7 hours are classroom occupancy and, respectively, for 2020/2021 -674.1 hours, of which 477.7 hours are classroom occupancy.

The submitted reference under Art. 112, para. 2. clearly shows that the candidate is a prepared teacher of basic disciplines from the Bachelor and Master's Education Programs of OKS in the Department of General Microbiology for the period 2016-2024.

She is a successful supervisor of 7 graduates. She has prepared 2 new training courses in optional disciplines and 5 cycles of exercises and is the holder of two independent courses.

- ***Participation in research projects and publication activities***

Dr. Dr. Yoana Kizheva, despite the high teaching load, presents evidence as an experienced researcher - microbiologist, leader of 2 projects and participant in 18 research projects. This means that she will be able to use the acquired knowledge and practical experience in the training of knowledgeable and capable staff of the Department of General Microbiology and BF at SU. As an expert, she is developing an international project under the Erasmus+ programme, Partnerships for Innovation and Exchange of Good Practice-Higher Education.

The results of the candidate's serious scientific research activity are presented in 23 co-authored scientific papers in refereed international journals (of which 18 she submitted to the competition), with a total impact factor of 31.485 total/30.503 for the competition), well cited, which is the basis for a personal h factor: 7. This, as well as 40 participations in national and international scientific forums, once again prove the high scientific performance and preparedness of the candidate in the field of the competition and the unit. This is also evident from the contributions, which are original of a fundamental and methodological nature.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing gives me reason to believe that the candidate Dr. Yoana Kizheva is a prepared teacher and highly qualified microbiologist, who has proven her ability to conduct education and applied research at a high level, to present the results and successfully train students, translating knowledge and experience in this dynamic scientific field. The minimum national criteria for the post of Associate Professor have been met and on many of the indicators, including those in the BF-SU Regulations, the sole candidate exceeds them.

On the basis of which, I confidently express my positive assessment and recommend the respected Scientific Jury to propose to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Arts at SU "Kl. Ohridski" to award ch. assistant professor Dr. Yoana Krasimirova Kizheva, position of "Associate Professor" in Professional direction: 4.3 Natural sciences, specialty Microbiology.

14.10.2024 r.

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(Prof. Svetla Danova, D.Sc.)