

OPINION

According to a competition for the occupation of the academic position of professor in professional direction 4.3 Biological sciences (Hydrobiology - ichthyology and aquaculture) for the needs of the "General and applied hydrobiology" department, announced in SG no. 82/14.10.2022

by Associate Professor Dr. Galerida N. Raikova-Petrova, Faculty of Biology at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

According to the announcement in the State Gazette № 82/14.10.2022 for a competition for "professor", there is only one candidate - Associate Professor Dr. Eliza Petrova Uzunova, from the Department of "General and Applied Hydrobiology" of the Biology Faculty at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

According to the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the rules of the University of Sofia for the implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, and the set of documents presented by Associate Professor Dr. Eliza P. Uzunova, she meets the formal conditions and requirements as a candidate for the academic position "professor".

I. Brief data on the candidate's career and thematic development

In 1994, Eliza Uzunova graduated with a master's degree in "Fisheries and Ichthyology" at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"; Faculty of Biology. In 2004, she defended the scientific degree "doctor", code "Hydrobiology". From 1996 until now, she worked at the Faculty of Biology of the Sofia University, going through all the steps in the hierarchy - from assistant to associate professor in the Department of "General and Applied Hydrobiology" of the Faculty of Biology at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

There are 4 thematic areas in which Assoc. Prof. Dr. Uzunova's works:

- ✓ aquaculture
- ✓ rare and endangered species of fish
- ✓ foreign and invasive fish species
- ✓ approaches to restoring river connectivity

Dr. E. Uzunova participates in the competition for a professorship with 25 scientific works, of which 2 monographs, 7 book chapters, and 1 textbook.

I believe that the participation of Associate Professor Dr. Uzunova in the announced competition is logical, justified, and meets the legal requirements.

II. Characteristics of scientific and scientific-applied developments

I accept as credible the achievements of the candidate in the "Reference for Original Scientific Contributions" from her overall research work. These results are the product of diverse approaches and the application of adequate methods, which allow the scientific conclusions to be convincing, comparable, and usable by other researchers.

1. Review and analysis of publications and scientometric indicators

Assoc. Prof. E. Uzunova presents 25 publications published in the period 2014 - 2022. On average, she publishes 3 publications per year - a relatively good number in the field of ichthyological research. The candidate shows workability and creative activity, which I wish her to keep in the future.

Of the articles presented for the competition, 13 are scientific publications in publications that are referenced and indexed in databases with scientific information (WEB OF SCIENCE and SCOPUS). Three publications have more than 30 co-authors but are included in the scientific contributions. Assoc. Prof. Uzunova is the author of 2 monographs, 1 textbook, and 7 book chapters or collective monographs.

Out of the 300 citations presented, 54 are hidden self-citations. I accept 246 citations, the majority of which are in refereed and indexed journals.

2. Scientific research projects

Dr. Uzunova participated in 37 projects, 3 of which are international. She participated in the development of 12 projects financed by national ministries and organizations and in 4 - by the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area 2009-2014. She participates in 18 intra-university projects at the Sofia University's Scientific Fund, of which she is the head of 13.

3. Analysis and assessment of contributions

Associate Professor Uzunova's achievements are of a scientific and scientific-applied nature. I accept the reference for her scientific contributions. They are grouped into 4 areas.

1. Rare and endangered species of fish - the bullhead *Cottus gobio* and the *Cottus haemusi* are discussed in a monograph.

2. Approaches to restoring river connectivity. An assessment of the combined impacts of hydropower stations on ecosystems and the ecological state of rivers has been made. Mitigation measures have been proposed to reduce the negative impact of hydropower stations on the environment.

3. Foreign and invasive fish species. Aquatic invertebrates and terrestrial species are included here, which does not correspond to the theme of the contest.

4. Aquaculture. It is prepared economic, social, ecological and market-wise analysis of the development of the „Aquaculture“ sector in Bulgaria after its admission of Bulgaria to the EU. A significant part of the data published so far is regarding species diversity, origin, biology, morphology, distribution, breeding, and the conservation of trout species (sem. Salmonidae).

In a purely pragmatic aspect, the contributions in all four directions are significant for the ecologically appropriate use of fish resources and for the implementation of nature protection and conservation measures.

III. Administrative and organizational activity

After 2014, Dr. E. Uzunova participated in 8 scientific councils and scientific expert commissions. She is a member of the following international and national professional organizations: Union of Bulgarian Biologists, the European Ichthyological Society (EIS), and the Fisheries Society of the British Isles (from 2012 to 2020).

IV. Educational and pedagogical activity

Assoc. Prof. Uzunova leads lectures on aquaculture, hydrobiology, and ichthyology, practical exercises, and educational practices in hydrobiology and aquaculture. She is the supervisor of 20 graduate students and 2 Ph.D. students.

V. Conclusion

According to the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the documentation presented by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Eliza Uzunova meets the requirements for awarding the academic position of "Professor".

Her publishing, research, educational, and administrative activities are closely related to the announced competition.

All of the above gives me the reason to recommend to the Scientific Jury to propose to the respected Faculty Council of the Biological Faculty at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" to elect Associate Professor Dr. Eliza Petrova Uzunova as a professor in the professional direction 4.3 Biological Sciences (Hydrobiology - Ichthyology and Aquaculture) for the needs of the Department of "General and Applied Hydrobiology".

Sofia,
Feb. 6, 2023.

Prepared: 
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