

## OPPINION/STATEMENT

**From:** Prof. Dr. Nikolay Dobrinov Nachev, Department of Biology, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Shumen University, elected as a member of the Scientific Jury and appointed by Order No. RD-38-611/15.11.2022 on The rector of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski"

**Regarding:** the procedure for professor in professional field 4.3. Biological Sciences (Vertebrate Zoology, Geographical Information Systems), announced in the Official Gazette, no. 100 from 16.12.2022

Associate Professor Diana Peneva Zlatanova is the only candidate in the announced procedure. After a detailed review of the attached documents, it can be concluded that all the necessary elements required by the ZRASRB, the Regulations for the implementation of the ZRASRB, the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" were provided. The submitted documentation for the competition is properly structured and presents the teaching and scientific activities of the candidate.

Assoc. Prof. Zlatanova graduated from the Faculty of Biology of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridsk" as a master's degree with specialization "Ecology, Zoology, Botany, Ecology, Genetics, Molecular Methods". She obtained her master's degree in 1991 after successful defense of thesis "Comparative analysis of the behavior of carnivorous mammals in the Zoo - Stara Zagora". She holds a Diploma in Endangered Species Management from the Darrell Institute in the UK. There are numerous post-graduate specializations and trainings in which she participated both as a student and as a trainer. In 2006 she defended a thesis entitled "Modelling the suitability of the habitats of the bear (*Ursus arctos* L.), the wolf (*Canis lupus* L.) and the lynx (*Lynx lynx* L.) in Bulgaria" and obtained the title of "Doctor". From 1993 to 2011 she holded various management positions in the structure of the Sofia Zoo, related to the management of animals and the scientific activity of the institution. From 2011 to the present, Associate Professor Zlatanova is a lecturer in the Department of Zoology and Anthropology at the Faculty of Biology of Sofia University "St.

Kliment Ohridski", as in 2016 acquires a habilitation. She is generally specializes in the field of theriology, work in a GIS environment and GIS modeling. During her career, she was the supervisor of 15 diploma theses, five doctoral theses (directly) and 10 as a consultant, and two of the directly supervised doctoral students have already defended their works. Assoc. Prof Zlatanova communicates in five languages and has diverse digital and information technology skills. Over the years of activity in the field of biological research, she has been a participant in various working groups and is a co-author in 99 scientific publications at the moment. A large part of these publications are in journals with an impact factor (all quartiles, with over 10 in Q1 and Q2), and Assoc. Prof. Zlatanova's total citations are over 3500. Currently, the candidate's h-index is 11. She participated as a scientist and expert in numerous international and national projects, she prepared reviews for Bulgarian and foreign scientific journals and is currently on the editorial board of Acta Zoologica Bulgarica. She teaches eight disciplines in the Bachelor's degree, four in the Master's degree and one discipline in the doctoral programs. For the last five years, she has fulfilled the minimum of general and auditorium occupancy.

The reference on the minimum national requirements by the applicant under Art. 2b of the RASRB for scientific area 4. Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics; professional direction 4.3. Biological Sciences, shows fulfillment of the minimum number of points for the criteria:

group A "dissertation work" 50 points out of the required 50 points; group C "habilitation work" 100 points out of the required 100 points; group D "scientific publications" 577 points out of the required 200 items; group D "citations" 3960 points out of the required 100 points; group E "projects" 340 points out of the required 150 points.

From the documentation, it can be seen that the scientific production and realization of Associate Professor Zlatanova far exceed the necessary criteria for the acquisition of "Professor" under the legislation of the Republic of Bulgaria. The authorship of the submitted titles for the procedure is beyond any doubt. The candidate's research is relatively diverse, which is a great advantage for a university professor. The huge amount of citations shows that the research is relevant and important to the scientific community around the world. Assoc. Prof. Zlatanova is part of many and diverse working groups and has included her students and doctoral students in them. In this way, she provided a career for many young people she once trained. Many of her students are still actively engaged in academic and teaching activities in the country and abroad. She was on the

jury of eleven doctoral students and prepared five reviews and six opinions on them. Together with her colleagues, Associate Professor Zlatanova participated in 38 scientific forums for the period after submitting her habilitation documents in 2016. She participates in five national and international scientific and non-governmental organizations, as well as in the administration of the Faculty of Biology of SU.

In my opinion, the contributions are adequately summarized and accurately explained. These contributions are formed into three groups, twelve are fundamental and six are applied in nature. I will not analyze their characteristics in detail, but I recognize all of them.

### Conclusion

After a detailed analysis of the documentation submitted in accordance with the procedures and in view of the fact, that for years I have been closely monitoring the scientific activity and scientific production of Associate Professor Zlatanova, I can state that she fully fulfills the requirements for occupying the academic position "professor" according to ZRASRB and the regulations for its implementation, as well as the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski". As a member of the Scientific Jury for the announced procedure, appointed by order No. RD-38-611/15.11.2022 of the Rector of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", I give a positive assessment and vote "For" the election of Assoc. Dr. Diana Peneva Zlatanova to the academic position of "Professor" in professional direction 4.3. Biological Sciences.

10.04.2023,

Shumen



(Prof. Dr. Nikolay Nachev)