

STATEMENT

by **Prof. Velizar Kostadinov Gochev, PhD,**
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of the materials submitted for participation in a competition for the appointment to the academic position “Professor” at the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv 4. Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics, professional field 4.3 Biological Sciences (Morphology)

1. General description of the materials provided in the competition

By order RD-21-331 dated 15/02/2023 of the Rector of the UP I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury in the competition for the appointment to the academic position “Professor” at the UFT in higher education area 54. Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics, professional field 4.3 Biological Sciences (Morphology), announced in the State Gazette No. 92 of 18/11/2022 and on the website of the UP for the needs of the Department Developmental Biology at the Biological Faculty. The only candidate who has applied for participation in the announced competition is Assoc. Prof. Elenka Stoilova Georgieva, PhD. The set of materials, submitted by the candidate on paper and electronic form is in compliance with the The Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of UP (RDASUP). Other documents, including evidence of academic publications and work experience.

For her participation in the competition Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD, has submitted an authored monograph, 43 scientific works, one chapter of collective monography, two textbooks and one handbook, which which do not duplicate the materials from the dissertation for the obtaining of a scientific and educational doctoral degree, therefore, all submitted materials are accepted for evaluation.

The content of the documents submitted allows me to categorically define the procedure as lawful.

2. Short biographical information about the candidate

In 1981 Elenka Stoilova Georgieva graduated Medical College - Plovdiv, acquiring specialization Nurse – general profile. In 1991, she obtained a Master's degree in Biology from the Faculty of Biology at UP. In 2020, after a successful thesis defense Elenka Georgieva obtained educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in Zoology (01.06.0) by the Higher Attestation Commission in. The professional career of Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD, started with the position of nurse (1984-1986), continued as teacher on Biology (1992-1993), while her academic development passed consecutively through all hierarchy stages – Part-time Assistant Professor, Assistant, Senior Assis-

tant, Chief Assistant, and Associate Professor. The administrative carrier of Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD, is impressive. She has been Head of Attestation Committee of Biological Faculty (2014-2016), Vice Chairman of the General Meeting of Biological Faculty (2015 - still), Chairmen of Section Biology at Union of scientists in Bulgaria – branch Plovdiv (2018 – still), Vice Chairman of UP Ethical Committee (2022 – still) and Head of Department “Developmental Biology (2019 – still).

The professional biography of the candidate is entirely within the scope of the announced competition. The creative development of Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD, is closely related to the faculty and the primary division, that have stated the need for this academic position.

3. General characteristics of the candidate’s activity

Assessment of the candidate’s research activity

Group of indicators A: Indicator 1 Dissertation for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” – requirement of ASDARB – 50 pts., implementation by the candidate – 50 pts.

Defended dissertation for the PhD degree on the topic “*Evolutionary aspects in the manifestation and cell-tissue localization of blood group antigens A and B in vertebrates*”.

Group of indicators C (The sum of indicators 3 or 4):

Indicator 3 Habilitation “dissertation-monography or Indicator 4 Scientific articles in publications that are referred and indexed in the Scopus and Web of Science global databases of scientific information – requirement of ASDARB – 100 pts., implementation by the candidate – 100 pts.

For her participation in the competition and in satisfaction of indicator B, Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD has submitted a monographic paper entitled “*Application of food additive PAPA® in men suffering from sub/infertility and varicocele*”, ISBN 978-619-236-411-3, published by FastPrintBooks in 2022. The monography is structured in 12 chapters and reference list. The monography could be separated into two parts – (1) theoretical part, based on detailed analysis of state of the arts in studied scientific problem, causes, diagnostic methods and possibilities for curing of men infertility and (2) experimental part based on the original author’s experiments and studies. In the first part, Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD clearly formulates the main goal and tasks of the research. She also clearly defines the main reasons affecting men’s infertility and compares the most widely applied clinical diagnostic techniques. The author focused the attention on the possibilities for application of food additives as a supplement during the medication process. In the conclusion, of the first part of the monography Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD correctly highlights the indecisive scientific data about the real effect of food supplements as additional to the major medication therapy and in this way, she clearly defines the needs of a study like this. In the second part, conditionally defined by myself as experimental, Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva

published her original results based on a huge experimental scheme, including 220 men with sub/infertility and VCT. The effect of three months course of oral application of the studied food supplement PAPA[®] in men with sub/infertility and VCT separately and in combination with smoking has been evaluated. The results obtained are correctly interpreted in comparison with results published by other authors. The positive effect of the studied food supplement was defined. The main contribution of the monography is in applied aspect and it is an important base for the future studies focused on the detailed clearance of the exact mechanism of the positive effect of food supplements on men's infertility.

Group of indicators D (the sum of indicators from 5 to 11) – requirement of ASDARB – 200 pts., implementation by the candidate – 403 pts.

Indicator 7 Scientific publications in journals that are referred and indexed in the Scopus and Web of Science global databases of scientific information.

To cover this group of indicators, Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD, presents 24 research papers, published in *Journal of Environmental Protection & Ecology*, *Folia Biologica*, *Acta Zoologica Bulgarica*, *Waters*, *Toxics* и др. Publication G7_5, published in Journal of Dental and Medicinal Sciences, must be removed by the indicator, because the journal has no IF, SJR or Q in Scopus and Web of Science metric systems. The general characteristic of the candidate's research activities is supplemented by 19 additional scientific papers, which are not included in indicator 7, because of the lack of IF or SJR, but the results and conclusions, published in these papers will be taken into account.

The main research direction of the candidate is the application of a multi biomarkers in ecotoxicological studies, based on histological changes in organs of various fish species. This research direction is expanded by application of Chinese mussels as bio-indicator species. The second characteristic research direction is focused on the expression of some markers associated with metabolic syndrome and the effect of obesity on the men's fertility. Publications dedicated on the immune histochemical determination of ghrelin in gastro-intestinal epithelial in rats; relationship between flow-mediated vasodilatation and some bio-markers of endothelial activation in patients with pre-hypertension and other clear the wide range of research topics, technical knowledge and theoretical competence of Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD.

Group of indicators E (the sum of indicators from 12 to 15) – requirement of ASDARB – 100 pts., implementation by the candidate – 704 pts.

An important criterion in the assessment of the scientific achievements of any researcher is the citation rate of his/her publications. Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD, has provided a list of 325 independent positive citations of her works in the systems of Scopus and Web of Science, 55 citations in non-referenced peer-reviewed journals. The high share of citations in the Scopus and Web of

Science systems shows that the results of the candidate's studies have found serious recognition by the international scientific community.

I assess the contributions in the research works of Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD, as scientific, applied science and applied. The dominant group are the applied science contributions, which I consider positive. The contributions resulting from the research activity of the candidate are of original nature, as well as such supplementing and upgrading existing knowledge. The scientific production submitted in the competition categorically presents Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD, as an authoritative specialist in the field of the announced competition, who has her own recognizable image and research theme in our country.

Assessment of the educational and pedagogical activity of the candidate

Group of indicators F (the sum of indicators from 16 to the end) – requirement of ASDARB – 150 pts., implementation by the candidate – 286.2 pts.

Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD is the sole supervisor of one successfully defended PhD student and a co-supervisor of another three successfully defended PhD students. The candidate is a participant in 14 research projects – four governed by the NSF and ten university projects at the UP, and the leader of three of them. Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD, is the independent author of a textbook in the course of the announced competition – General histology (ISBN 978-619-202-812-1) and General pathology (ISBN 978-619-202-813-8) and one Laboratory handbook General embryology (ISBN 978-619-202-813-8), published by University publishing house "Paisii Hilendarski".

In terms of content, the textbook and the handbook are both of quality, which indicates the high level of theoretical training and teaching experience of Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD. The candidate is the sole author of six curricula in Embryology and histology, Histology and pathology, Cell biology, embryology and histology, Developmental biology, Human developmental biology, Reproductive biotechnologies, which are entirely persistent in terms of content and demonstrate the ability of Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD, to transfer successfully the results of her research into the teaching process. Fourteen graduates supervised by the candidate is evidential for the responsibility with which Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD, approaches her educational tasks.

The teaching experience of Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD, is at a high level, complying with all standards for a university professor.

Additional requirements have been introduced for the academic position " Professor" in the Faculty of Biology at UP, that were fulfilled by Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD as follows:

- ✓ The candidate must be the author or co-author of at least 1 university textbook in the relevant field and specialty of the announced competition – fulfilment: 2 textbooks and one

- laboratory handbook;
- ✓ The candidate must have supervised at least 2 successful PhD students in the relevant field of the competition – fulfilment: 4 PhD student;
 - ✓ The candidate must provide evidence of at least 10 years of teaching experience – fulfilment: 28 years, 8 months and 23 days.
 - ✓ The candidate must have been a leader/participant in at least 2 scientific projects – fulfilment: 8 projects, 2 of which were projects of the Scientific Research Fund at the Ministry of Education, 1 - a National Scientific Programme project, 1 - international and 4 – internal for the institution.
 - ✓ The candidate must have organizational and administrative experience (the last 10 years) in the faculty – Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD, was a member and Chairman of the of the faculty committee for atestation, faculty ethic committee, member of the faculty teams that prepared the self-evaluation reports for different accreditation procedures, editorial board member of *Journal of Bioscience and Biotechnology*, etc.

All additional requirements of FB for the academic position of "Professor" are fulfilled by Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD in a categorical manner.

4. Assessment of the personal contribution of the candidate

I appreciate the candidate's personal contribution to the implementation of the materials presented in the competition as completely relevant to her experience and competence, which are the outcome of many years of work in the area of Morphology.

5. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no critical remarks with regard to the content of the documents presented in the competition and the way they have been designed.

6. Personal impressions

I have known Elenka Georgieva for over 15 years, which allows me to shape an objective opinion about her professional and personal qualities. She is an erudite teacher, a precise to pedantic researcher, delicate in her relations with other colleagues and respected by students and colleagues.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials presented by Assoc. Prof. Elenka Stoilova Georgieva, PhD meet all requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria (ASDARB), the Regulations for the Implementation of ASDARB and the corresponding Regulations of the UP.

The candidate in the competition has submitted a sufficient number of scientific works published after the materials used in the defense of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” and in the acquisition of the academic position “Associate Professor”. The works of Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD deliver original applied science and applied contributions. The scientific and teaching qualification of Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD, is unquestionable.

The results achieved by Assoc. Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD in her teaching and research activities fully comply with the minimum national requirements and with the additional requirements of the Technological Faculty, adopted in connection with RASDUP.

After getting acquainted with the materials and the scientific works presented in the competition, and having analyzed their significance and the contributions contained in them, I find it reasonable to give my categorical positive assessment and to recommend to the Scientific Jury to complete a report to the Faculty Council of the Biological Faculty proposing the appointment of Assoc. Prof. Elenka Stoilova Georgieva, PhD to the academic position “Professor” at the UP, the field of higher education 4. Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics, professional field 4.3 Biological Sciences (Morphology).

04/04/2023

Written by:

(Prof. Velizar Gochev, PhD)