

REVIEW STATEMENT

by **Dr. Ivelin Aldinov Mollov - associate professor,**
Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski", Faculty of Biology,
Department of "Ecology and Ecosystem Protection"

of a dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor" by:
field of higher education 4. Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics
professional direction 4.3. Biological Sciences
doctoral program "Zoology"

Author: *Svetlozara Boyanova Kazandzhieva*

Title: *"Biodiversity and distribution of the families Bolitophilidae, Diadocidiidae, Ditomyiidae, Keroplatidae and Mycetophilidae (Diptera) in the Oriental region"*

Scientific advisor: *Prof. Dimitar Nikolaev Bechev - PU "P. Hilendarski", Faculty of Biology, Department of "Zoology", retired*

1. General presentation of the procedure and the doctoral student

By order No. RD-21-703 of 30 March 2023 of the Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski" (PU) I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury to ensure a procedure for the defense of a dissertation work on the topic "Biodiversity and distribution of the families Bolitophilidae, Diadocidiidae, Ditomyiidae, Keroplatidae and Mycetophilidae (Diptera) in the Oriental region" for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the field of higher education 4. Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics, professional direction 4.3. Biological Sciences, doctoral program "Zoology". The author of the dissertation is Svetlozara Boyanova Kazandzhieva - a full-time PhD student at the Department of Zoology with supervisor Prof. Dimitar Nikolaev Bechev from the Polytechnic "P. Hilendarski", Faculty of Biology, Department of "Zoology", retired.

The set of paper materials presented by Svetlozara Boyanova Kazandzhieva is in accordance with Article 36 (1) of the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff of the PU, includes the following documents:

- a request to the Rector of the PU to disclose the procedure for the defense of a dissertation work;
- curriculum vitae in European format;
- protocol from the departmental council related to reporting the readiness to open the procedure and preliminary discussion of the dissertation work;
- dissertation work;
- abstract;

- a list of scientific publications on the subject of the dissertation;
- copies of scientific publications;
- list of noticed citations;
- declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents.

The PhD student has attached two publications.

2. Relevance of the topic

The topic of the presented dissertation work is current and represents the first mass generalization, supplemented with many new data, including the description of new species for science, on fungus gnats in the Oriental region.

3. Knowing the problem

The PhD student knows the problem perfectly. This is evident both from the detailed literature reference, which she evaluates analytically, which helps to solve the set goal and tasks, and from the long period of work dedicated to the given problem and the hundreds of consultations and joint cooperation with a number of specialists in the field (listed in the chapter "Acknowledgments").

4. Research methodology

The PhD student uses modern zoological methods supported by GIS visualization and applies them expertly, which shows her excellent methodological and practical training as a field researcher.

5. Characterization and evaluation of the dissertation work and contributions

The dissertation contains 264 pages and includes: 9 tables, 71 figures, 4 appendices and 295 literary sources, of which 5 are in Cyrillic and 290 are in Latin.

The main focus of the dissertation work is the "Results and Discussion" chapter. It presents the results of the applied modern zoological and zoogeographical methods for a similar kind of study, supported by GIS analysis and visualization. The work ends with summarized results and conclusions (10 in number), where the established results of the study are summarized and they fully meet the set goal and tasks. The nature and reliability of the material on which the conclusions are based are beyond doubt. The PhD student was sufficiently precise, both in the field work and in the analysis and processing of the materials.

The dissertation work is entirely the personal work of the PhD student. There is no evidence of fraudulent use of others' unpublished or published results, observations, ideas, etc.

6. Evaluation of the publications and personal contribution of the PhD student

The publications that the PhD student provides are 2, in the prestigious zoological journal with an impact factor Zootaxa (Q2), and in one of them she is the lead author. The total number of points that the two publications carry is 40, which more than fulfills the requirements under the Law.

7. Abstract

It covers 32 pages and briefly covers the introductory sections and a little more detail - "Results and Discussion". I found complete uniformity of the conclusions in the dissertation and the abstract. It

is well written, concise, clear and meets the requirements of the relevant regulations, reflecting the main results achieved in the dissertation.

8. Recommendations for future use of dissertation contributions and results

I have no critical remarks and recommendations for the PhD student.

Conclusion

The dissertation contains scientific, scientific-applied and applied results, which represent an original contribution to science and meet all the requirements of the Law on the development of the academic staff in the republic of Bulgaria, the regulations for the implementation of the Law and the relevant regulations of the University of Plovdiv.

The dissertation shows that the PhD student Svetlozara Boyanova Kazandzhieva possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific specialty of zoology, demonstrating qualities and skills for independent conduct of scientific research.

Due to the above, I confidently give my **positive assessment** of the conducted research, presented by the above-reviewed dissertation work, abstract, achieved results and contributions, and I propose to the honorable scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to Svetlozara Boyanova Kazandzhieva in the field of higher education: 4. Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics, professional direction 4.3. Biological sciences, doctoral program "Zoology".

08.05.2023.

Reviewer:

(Assoc. Prof. Ivelin Mollov, PhD)