

## **OPINION**

**By Prof. Elenka Stoilova Georgieva, PhD**

**Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”**

of the documents submitted for participation in the contest for the academic position of "associate professor" at Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” by: field of higher education 4. Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics, professional direction 4.3. Biological Sciences (Genetics - General and Evolutionary Genetics)

In the contest for the academic position "Associate Professor", announced in the State Gazette, issue 98 of 19.11.2024 and on the website of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" for the needs of the Department of Developmental Biology at the Faculty of Biology, with the candidate being Chief Assistant Dr. Penka Lazarova Vasileva from the Department of Developmental Biology, Faculty of Biology.

### **1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate**

By Order No. RD-22-442 of 18.02.2025, issued by the Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" (PU), I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury in the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at PU in the field of higher education 4. Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Informatics, professional field 4.3. Biological Sciences (Genetics – General and Evolutionary Genetics).

One candidate has submitted documents for participation in the announced competition: Chief Assistant Dr. Penka Lazarova Vasileva from the Department of Developmental Biology, Faculty of Biology.

The documents submitted by Chief Assistant Dr. Penka Lazarova Vasileva comply with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at PU and the Higher Education and Science Act of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Since 2002, Chief Assistant Dr. Penka Vasileva has been working at the Institute of Fisheries and Aquaculture in Plovdiv, where as a full-time doctoral student, She has defended her dissertation work related to a study of reproductive and morphological features of *Astacus leptodactylus*. Since 2010, he has initially worked as a biologist - chief expert, and then as an

assistant professor at the University of Plovdiv, Faculty of Biology, Department of Developmental Biology. From 01. 06. 2011 to the present, he is a chief assistant at the same department. The candidate's professional interests are related to the announced competition.

In her documentation, Chief Assistant Penka Vasileva has attached a total of 1 monograph, 49 scientific publications, 3 books, 2 textbooks, 2 online courses and 14 research projects. For her participation in the competition for associate professor, she has presented 1 monograph, 17 scientific publications, 2 textbooks and 10 research projects.

Chief Assistant Penka Vasileva has significant professional experience in student education, research work and project activities. She is distinguished by responsibility in carrying out the tasks undertaken, shows good organizational and communication skills, as well as, professionalism in working with laboratory and microscopic equipment.

## **2. A general description of the applicant's activity**

The candidate conducts exercises, seminars and lectures with bachelor's programs at the Faculty of Biology of the University of Plovdiv. The academic disciplines are General and Population Genetics, Theory of Evolution, Theory of Evolution and Theoretical Biology, Genetics. She has prepared lecture courses for bachelor's programs in Fundamentals of Genetics, General Genetics, Genetics, Theory of Evolution, Cell Biology, for the Faculty of Biology and the branches of the University of Plovdiv in Smolyan and Kardzhali. She has also prepared study programs for a Master's course, for a specialized course "Motivated teachers" and 2 electronic courses on genetics and genetics basics.

In connection with the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements, Dr. Penka Vasileva presents a dissertation (50 points), a monograph (100 points), related to the effect of nutritional supplements on dividing cells of a model genetic object, a plant test system *Allium cepa in vivo*, subjected to the action of different concentrations of selected dyes, preservatives and sweeteners.

Dr. Penka Vasileva also presents a total of 17 scientific publications, referenced and indexed in Scopus and Web of Science (235 points), as well as, a total of 67 citations, from which 134 points are formed out of the required 50 points. From all indicators, the candidate collects a total of 519 points out of the required 400 points.

Along with this, she is a co-author of two textbooks (14 points). She has participated in 10 research projects, of which 4 are national (40 points). A total of 54 points are formed from group E, although they are not a mandatory criterion for the announced competition.

The candidate fulfills and exceeds the additional requirements of the Faculty of Biology of the University of Plovdiv. The following are presented: two co-authored textbooks, 9 defended diplomas (out of the required 5), a document for teaching experience of 14 years and 21 days (out of the required 5 years), participation in 10 research projects (out of the required 2), administrative experience over the last five years. The candidate has participated in: accreditation procedures, student candidate campaigns, the organizing committee of BalkanBio 2025, etc. She is a member of the Quality Commission at the Faculty of Biology and is the materially responsible person of the Department of Developmental Biology.

Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Penka Vasileva fulfills, and in some indicators even exceeds, all minimum national requirements, as well as the specific ones of the Faculty of Biology and the University of Sofia for holding the academic position of "associate professor".

### **3. Personal impressions**

I know Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Penka Vasileva as a student at the Faculty of Biology, and later as a colleague at the Department of Developmental Biology. Penka Vasileva always appears to be responsible, collegial and tolerant towards her colleagues and students, with whom she builds excellent relationships as a teacher, dedicated to her work. She is a well-established university lecturer and researcher with proven skills and abilities in teamwork, and as an administrative commitment in the department she is a materially responsible person.

### **4. Critical remarks and recommendations**

There are no critical remarks about the candidate. I am sure that Chief Assistant Penka Vasileva will continue to develop as a prosperous scientist, researcher and lecturer and to raise the prestige of the Department of Developmental Biology, the Faculty of Biology and Plovdiv University.

### **CONCLUSION**

The documents and materials presented by Chief Assistant Penka Lazarova Vasileva, PhD meet all the requirements set by the LDASRB, the Regulations for its implementation, the

Regulations for academic development of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski", as well as the Additional requirements of Faculty of Biology. Chief Assistant Penka Vasileva has presented a significant number of scientific publications in well recognized international and national journals. The theoretical developments have practical applicability, and some of them are directly oriented to the academic work. The scientific and teaching qualifications of Chief Assistant-Professor Penka Vasileva are undoubted.

The achieved by Chief Assistant-Professor Penka Vasileva results in the teaching activities and research fully comply with, and by some criteria exceed, the minimum national and additional requirements of the Faculty of Biology of University of Plovdiv for the academic position of "Associate Professor".

After the assessment of the presented materials, scientific works and analysis of their significance along with the achieved scientific and applied contributions, I recommend to the Scientific Jury a preparation of a report-proposal to the to the Faculty Council of Faculty of Biology, University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski" towards the election of **Chief Assistant Professor Penka Lazarova Vasileva, PhD** for the academic position "**Associate Professor**" in University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski" in the field of higher education 4. Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics, professional direction 4.3. Biological Sciences ("**Genetics - General and Evolutionary Genetics**").

31.03.2025

Plovdiv

Prepared the opinion: .....

(Prof. Elenka Georgieva, PhD)