



*BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES*  
**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**

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**POSITION**

**By Prof. Georgi Sashev Popgeorgiev MD**

**Place of work National Museum of Natural History - BAS**

**Member of a scientific jury appointed by Order No. 845/13.11.2024 of the Director of the  
National Museum of Natural History at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences**

of the materials submitted for participation in a competition  
for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor"  
**of the University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski"**

**In connection with the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor",  
announced in the State Gazette No. 98 of 19.11.2024, and on the website of the University  
of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski" for the needs of the Department of Zoology at the Faculty  
of Biology in the field of higher education: 4. "Natural Sciences, Mathematics and  
Informatics"; Professional field: 4.3. "Biological Sciences" (Zoology - zoology of  
vertebrate animals)**

Under the competition, only one candidate has submitted regular documents within the  
legally announced deadline - Assist. ace. Prof. Vesela Ilieva Mitkovska, PhD, Department of  
Zoology, Faculty of Biology, Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski".

**General presentation of the procedure and the applicant**

Vesela Ilieva Mitkovska was born on February 4, 1977. In 1999, she completed a  
Master's degree in Biology with a specialization in "Genetics and Microbiology" at Paisii  
Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. In 2014, she successfully defended her PhD in the  
professional field 4.3. "Biological Sciences" with a focus on "Zoology". Since 2003, she has  
been working in the Department of Zoology at the Faculty of Biology of Paisii Hilendarski  
University of Plovdiv, starting as a **junior biology expert**, becoming an **assistant** in 2011, and  
a **chief assistant** since 2015.

I In addition, the candidate has participated in the successful implementation of numerous national and international projects, establishing herself as one of the leading researchers in Bulgaria and Europe in the field of vertebrate animals.

In 2014, Vesela successfully defended her doctoral dissertation in the field of zoology on the topic “Assessment of ecological risk in small mammal populations in situ using genetic biomarkers.”

#### **General characteristics of the activity of the applicant(s)**

Vesela Mitkovska successfully meets the scientometric indicators (national, as well as the additional requirements of the Faculty of Biology, Plovdiv University 'P. Hilendarski') in all categories, often exceeding them. The scientometric report includes 22 scientific papers, of which 17 have an 'Impact Factor', 4 have SJR on Scopus, and 1 is a book chapter. All scientific papers (except for one) are presented in English. In the presented works, Vesela is a co-author, which demonstrates her excellent teamwork skills. Additionally, in 9 of these works, she is the first author, showing her leadership qualities and outstanding skills in leading a scientific team. The candidate has provided a list of citations—50 times in Web of Science and Scopus.

Vesela Mitkovska has divided her scientific contributions into three main areas: (1) Biomarkers for assessing the genotoxic and cytotoxic potential of the environment in various species of zoomonitors; (2) The role of vertebrates as vectors and reservoirs of viral zoonoses and blood parasites; (3) Other studies on species-specific characteristics in mammals. The individual groups are further categorized into 'Original applied scientific contributions', 'Fundamental scientific contributions', and 'Methodological contributions'. The distribution is well-founded and fully encompasses the numerous scientific contributions contained in the scientific papers presented by the candidate. The contributions fall entirely within the scientific field of the announced competition, namely 4.3 Biological Sciences, scientific specialty 'Zoology' (code 01.06.02).

The significant, valuable, and diverse contributions in the fields of zoology, genetics, and biomonitoring are of both fundamental and applied importance. Their significance is clearly evidenced by the notably high number of citations, most of which are in journals with an 'Impact Factor' referenced in Web of Science and Scopus."

#### **Critical remarks and recommendations**

I have no critical remarks!

## Conclusion

The candidate, Dr. Vesela Mitkovska, meets all scientometric indicators. Based on the materials submitted for the competition, I firmly believe that she fully meets, and in many aspects exceeds, the national criteria for holding the academic position of 'Associate Professor,' as defined by the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and its Implementation Regulations, as well as the additional requirements of the Faculty of Biology, Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski." I know Vesela personally and can confidently state that she is a motivated, hardworking, and established scholar, with a clearly defined scientific profile and proven scientific and applied scientific contributions.

On the basis of the above, I strongly recommend the members of the Scientific Jury to support the election of Assist. ace. Prof. Vesela Mitkovska, PhD for occupying the academic position of Associate Professor in the professional field 4.3. Biological Sciences, scientific specialty "Zoology", for the needs of the Department of Zoology, Faculty of Biology of the University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski".

Plovdiv:

07.04.2025

Who prepared the opinion:

/Prof. Dr. G. Popgeorgiev/