

REVIEW

by DSc Neli Hristova Grozeva - Professor at Trakia University, Stara Zagora
on the materials submitted for participation in a competition
for the academic position of **Associate Professor**
at Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”
in the field of higher education 4. Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics,
professional field 4.3. Biological Sciences (Botany)

In the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor, announced in the State Gazette, issue No. 96 of 11.11.2025, and on the website of Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski,” for the needs of the Department of Botany and Biological Education at the Faculty of Biology, the candidate is Chief Assist. Prof. Dr Krasimir Tihomirov Todorov from the same department.

1. General presentation of the submitted materials

By Order No. RD-22-39 of 09.01.2026 issued by the Rector of Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” (PU), I was 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 (Botany), announced for the needs of the Department of Botany and Biological Education at the Faculty of Biology.

Only one candidate submitted documents for participation in the announced competition: Chief Assist. Prof. Dr Krasimir Tihomirov Todorov from Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski.”

The set of materials submitted by Chief Assist. Prof. Todorov in hard copy complies fully with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at PU and includes:

- an application form addressed to the Rector;
- a European-format Curriculum Vitae;
- a Master’s degree diploma with transcript (original and copy);
- a PhD diploma (original and copy);
- a list of scientific publications;
- copies of scientific publications;
- a list of citations;
- a statement of compliance with the national minimum requirements and additional faculty

requirements (if applicable);

- abstracts of the materials under Art. 65 of the Regulations (in Bulgarian and a foreign language) with an extended habilitation report;
- a self-assessment of contributions;
- a declaration of originality and authenticity of the submitted documents;
- a certificate of employment record;
- documents related to teaching activity;
- documents related to research activity;
- documents required under additional faculty criteria;
- and other supporting documents (including a list of publications used for the position of Chief Assistant Professor).

The candidate has submitted a total of 23 scientific publications, 3 teaching manuals, participation in 7 national research projects, and 14 scientific forums (10 international and 4 national).

For evaluation in the present competition, 19 scientific publications published in journals indexed in Web of Science and Scopus and outside the scope of the dissertation are considered, together with 3 teaching manuals and 7 research projects. Four dissertation-related publications are not subject to review. Documentation of an implemented development in the form of a registered Utility Model No. 4924 U1, as well as one patent application, has also been submitted, demonstrating the practical applicability of the research results.

The documentation is precisely organized in accordance with procedural requirements. No content overlap between publications is observed. All works are provided in full text. Citation data are correctly presented and verifiable.

2. Brief biographical data

Chief Assist. Prof. Dr Krasimir Tihomirov Todorov (born 1988) is an established lecturer and researcher at the Faculty of Biology, Plovdiv University.

His academic development began with obtaining a Master's degree at the same university, followed by the successful defense (2018) of a doctoral dissertation entitled "Biosystematic Study of the Genus *Carduus* L. (Asteraceae) in Bulgaria," for which he was awarded the PhD degree.

His professional career has been entirely within the Department of Botany and Biological Education (formerly “Botany and Methodology of Biology Education”), where he consecutively held the positions of Assistant (2013-2018) and Chief Assistant Professor (since 2018).

His teaching portfolio includes fundamental disciplines such as Botany, Plant Anatomy and Morphology, Pharmacognosy. Chief Assist. Prof. Todorov has developed significant scientific and pedagogical activity, including co-authorship of three teaching manuals and successful supervision of six undergraduate theses. He actively participates in university life as a member of evaluation committees and as an organizer of student competitions. He is proficient in English and possesses strong expertise in working with specialized research equipment, supporting his multidisciplinary research profile.

3. General evaluation of the candidate’s activity

Evaluation of teaching and pedagogical activity

Chief Assist. Prof. Todorov has more than ten years of teaching experience at the Faculty of Biology of PU “Paisii Hilendarski,” entirely within the scope of the announced competition. He teaches Botany, Plant Anatomy and Morphology, Pharmacognosy, Medicinal and Essential Oil Plants, and supervises field practice.

His teaching and methodological activity includes co-authorship of three university manuals in pharmaceutical botany, plant anatomy, and systematics. These publications demonstrate scientific precision and methodological coherence and contribute to improving the quality of education.

Under his supervision, six Bachelor’s theses in floristics and phytochemistry have been successfully defended, reflecting high pedagogical effectiveness.

His teaching experience, methodological preparation, and achievements in student supervision clearly demonstrate that he fully meets the requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor in Botany.

Evaluation of scientific and applied research activity

Chief Assist. Prof. Todorov’s scientific activity is characterized by high productivity, thematic consistency, and a clearly defined research profile in botany and phytochemistry. The materials submitted for the competition cover the period following his doctoral defense and demonstrate his development as an independent and recognizable researcher.

According to the official report on compliance with national minimum requirements, the candidate not only meets but significantly exceeds the required thresholds for professional field 4.3. Biological Sciences.

His scientific output includes 19 publications indexed in Web of Science and Scopus, with a total impact factor of 33.74.

The habilitation work comprises four publications in Q1 journals (Plants, International Journal of Molecular Sciences, Heliyon), with impact factors between 3.6 and 4.9. The research focuses on the phytochemical and metabolomic profiles and biological activity of the Balkan endemics *Micromeria frivaldszkyana* and *Marrubium frivaldskyanum*, demonstrating antioxidant, antimicrobial, and anti-inflammatory potential. The results outline a clearly structured and consistently developed research line with interdisciplinary character and significant pharmaceutical potential.

The remaining 15 publications further expand this profile and may be grouped into three main directions:

1. Floristic and monitoring studies in the Rhodope Mountains and Strandzha, contributing to plant diversity assessment and resource potential evaluation.
2. Comparative anatomical and morphological analyses of representatives of Lamiaceae aimed at taxonomic precision.
3. Phytochemical and biological studies of endemic and medicinal species, mainly published in Q1 and Q2 journals, with clear applied orientation.

Overall, the candidate's publication record demonstrates systematic development of research results, combining fundamental botanical studies with interdisciplinary approaches and practical applicability, which convincingly indicates scientific maturity and sustainable development of his research program.

His participation in 7 research and educational projects funded by national programs and in 14 scientific forums confirms sustained research engagement and professional mobility. The membership in the editorial board of the peer-reviewed journal *Ecologia Balkanica* further attests to his professional authority.

Contributions and citations

Chief Assist. Prof. Todorov's research integrates classical and modern approaches in the study of medicinal and endemic plants from the Bulgarian flora.

His scientific contributions include:

- Floristic and ecological studies with conservation assessment;
- Anatomical, morphological, and molecular-genetic investigations providing diagnostic taxonomic markers;
- Phytochemical and biological studies demonstrating selective antitumor, antibacterial, and antioxidant activity.

Applied contributions include the development of a registered utility model (No. 4924 U1, 2024) for a wound-healing patch based on *Marrubium peregrinum* extract, as well as a submitted patent application.

The candidate reports 46 citations, corresponding to 92 points (minimum required: 50), many of which are in Q1 and Q2 journals. His Scopus h-index is 5, indicating stable and increasing international visibility.

4. Evaluation of personal contribution

The personal contribution of Chief Assist. Prof. Dr Krasimir Tihomirov Todorov to the submitted publications and applied developments is clearly identifiable and substantial. He demonstrates the ability to independently organize and conduct comprehensive research activities.

5. Critical remarks and recommendations

No significant omissions or critical remarks were identified that would cast doubt on the quality of the candidate's work. All materials are prepared precisely and comply with regulatory requirements.

6. Personal impressions

Although I do not personally know Chief Assist. Prof. Krasimir Tihomirov Todorov, after thoroughly reviewing his scientific output, I would consider it a professional pleasure to meet him.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials submitted by Chief Assist. Prof. Dr Krasimir Tihomirov Todorov fully comply with the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, its implementing regulations, and the specific criteria of Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski.”

Based on the detailed examination of the submitted materials and the analysis of their scientific, applied, and methodological contributions, I give my unequivocally **positive evaluation**.

The results achieved by Chief Assist. Prof. Todorov in research and teaching provide full grounds for recommending that the respected Scientific Jury propose to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Biology the election of Chief Assist. Prof. Dr Krasimir Tihomirov Todorov to the academic position of Associate Professor at Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” in the field of higher education 4. Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics, professional field 4.3. Biological Sciences (Botany).

23.02.2026

Reviewer:

Prof. DSc Neli Grozeva