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OPINION

from

Associate Professor Dr. Violin Stoyanov Raykov

Institute of Oceanology "Fritjof Nansen" at the BAS, Varna Code 4. "Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics" Professional direction: 4.3 Biological sciences the scientific specialty "Ecology and ecosystem protection" scientific direction "Ecology of marine fauna"

designated as a member of the scientific jury

Regarding: Conducting a competition for the occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor", code 4. "Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics", Professional direction: 4.3. "Biological Sciences", the scientific specialty "Ecology and Protection of Ecosystems", scientific direction "Ecology and Molecular Taxonomy of Marine Organisms", scientific section "Biology and Ecology of the Sea", announced in the State Gazette no. 1/02/01/2024

1. Information about the contest

1.1 The competition was announced (SG, No. 1 of 02.01.2024) for the needs of the Institute of Oceanology - Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, by Decision of the National Assembly (Protocol No. 13 /15.12.2023) of the Institute of Oceanology - Bulgarian Academy of the sciences.

1.2 I participate in the composition of the scientific jury for the competition

according to Order No. 58/01.03.2024 of the Director of the Institute of Oceanology - Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

2. Brief information about the candidates in the competition

Chief Assistant Professor dr. Nina Stoycheva Dzhebekova, the only candidate in the competition, completed a bachelor's (1999-2003) and a master's program (2003-2004) in Ecology and Environmental Protection at TU-Varna. She works as an ecologist, assistant and chief assistant at IO-BAS.

3. Fulfillment of the requirements for occupying the academic position "Associate professor"

3.1 Applicant's Documents

The presented by Chief assistant dr. Dzhebekova, a set of materials on electronic media is in accordance with the "Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring educational and scientific degrees and for holding academic positions at the Institute of Oceanology - BAS and includes the following documents:

- Application for admission to the competition;
- List of documents;

- Autobiography;
- Copy of the higher education diploma (Master's);
- Copy of the doctor's degree;
- Certificate of acquired experience in the specific direction;
- List of scientific publications and copies of publications;
- Summaries of peer-reviewed publications;
- Reference to original scientific contributions;
- Reference of the citations of the scientific publications;
- List of scientific research projects and participation in scientific forums;
- Reference to the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements.

3.2 The candidate has fulfilled all the specified requirements under Annex 8.1 and has covered the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b of Law on the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria for the academic position "Associate Professor", as follows:

Group of indicators:

- A 1. Minimum requirements - 50 t, fulfilled - 50 t;
- C 4. Minimum requirements - 100 t fulfilled - 132 t;
- D 7. Minimum requirements - 220 t fulfilled - 267 t;
- D 11. Minimum requirements - 60 t fulfilled - 528 t;

4. Brief description of the presented scientific works/publications

The scientific works submitted for review are in the scientific field of the competition for the academic position of "associate professor" in the scientific specialty "Ecology and ecosystem protection", scientific direction "Ecology and molecular taxonomy" and can be systematized in the following main research topics:

- 1) Distribution, ecology and biodiversity of phytoplankton;
- 2) Characterization of the Black Sea microbiome in the Bulgarian Black Sea water area;
- 3) The population-genetic structure and health status of economically valuable fish species in the Bulgarian water area of the Black Sea;
- 4) Environment and human health;
- 5) Invasive species.

To participate in the competition, the candidate submitted 25 fully published scientific papers (22 in publications referenced and indexed in *Web of Science / Scopus*), one report and one strategic document; total number of citations - 264 and 20 cited scientific publications.

No plagiarism was found in the scientific works, published reports and strategic documents presented in the competition.

5. The main directions in the research activity

In the presented scientific works for the competition, a number of original, scientific-theoretical, scientific-applied and confirmatory contributions are made, classified in the following five areas:

Direction 1 Population genetics;

Direction 2 Phytoplankton;

Direction 3 Microbiome;

Direction 4 Ecology and protection of water ecosystems;

Direction 5 Conservation and sustainable use of fish resources.

A synthesized evaluation of the main scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the candidates

The prominent scientific contributions of Chief assistant professor dr. Nina Dzhembekova equal 15, and the scientific and applied contributions of the candidate are 5. Based on the analysis of provided materials, it can be summarized that the candidate's scientific and scientific-applied contributions in the identified directions are current and significant, leading to new knowledge and expanding existing knowledge in the field.

The above gives me reason to evaluate Chief assistant professor dr. Nina Dzhembekova as a successful and competent scientist, with considerable capacity as an experienced researcher.

6. Critical notes and recommendations

I have no significant critical comments on the materials for the competition and the candidate's scientific works. I would recommend Chief Assistant Professor dr. Nina Dzhembekova, with the development of her research career, to transfer her experience and knowledge to doctoral students and students to participate in research work in ecology, molecular genetics and sustainable management of marine biological resources.

7. Conclusion

After thoroughly familiarizing myself with the materials and scientific works presented in the competition and based on the analysis of their significance and the scientific and scientific-applied contributions contained in them, I confirm that the scientific achievements meet the requirements of the competition, the regulations for its application and the relevant regulations of the Institute of Oceanology - BAS, for the candidate's occupation of the academic position "Associate professor" in the scientific field and professional direction of the competition.

In particular, the candidate dr. Nina Dzhembekova, assistant professor, meets the minimum national requirements in the desired professional field.

The above facts satisfy the basic and specific requirements of the competition. I give my positive assessment of her candidacy, and I recommend to the esteemed committee that the candidate successfully transition to the academic position of "Associate Professor".

city of Varna, 18.04.2024 Signature: Заличен на
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violin Raykov  основание ЗЗЛД