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**BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
INSTITUTE OF EXPERIMENTAL MORPHOLOGY,
PATHOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY WITH A MUSEUM**

OPINION

By Associate Professor Dr. Mariana Stancheva Panayotova-Pencheva - Institute of Experimental Morphology, Pathology and Anthropology with a Museum at the BAS, appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury by Order **No. 66/04.10.2024** of the Director of IBER – BAS

In connection with a competition for the occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor" in professional field 4.3. Biological sciences, scientific specialty "Parasitology and helminthology" for the needs of the research group "Taxonomy, evolution and ecology of helminths", section "Biodiversity and ecology of parasites" at the department "Animal diversity and resources" of the IBER-BAS, according to the announcement in the State Gazette No. 66/06/08/2024

Documents of one candidate - Dr. Simona Georgieva Georgieva from the "Biodiversity and Ecology of Parasites" section of IBER - BAS have been submitted for participation in the competition. Simona Georgieva graduated with Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Biology at the Faculty of Biology of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" in 2006 and 2008, respectively. From 2005 to 2012, she worked as a biologist, research associate and chief assistant at the Central Laboratory of General Ecology, Institute of Experimental Pathology and Parasitology and Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research of the BAS. From 2011 to 2015, she worked as an assistant at the Institute of Parasitology of the Czech Academy of Sciences. In 2015, she defended her PhD in Biology at the University of South Bohemia - Czech Republic on the topic "Integrative taxonomic approach to study trematode diversity and their life cycles in freshwater ecosystems". From 2015 to 2020, she won scholarships and held post-doctoral positions at scientific institutions in the Czech Republic and Spain. From 2020 until now, she works as a biologist at IBER - BAS. She has 8 years and 6 months of experience in the field.

The attached documents for the selection procedure indicate that the applicant's research is mainly focused on the study of the biodiversity and evolution of helminths of the class Trematoda. Dr. Georgieva has been involved in a number of studies conducted by international scientific teams. The good results of these studies are evidenced by a large number of articles published in quality scientific journals such as Acta Parasitologica, Systematic Parasitology,

International Journal for Parasitology, Parasites & Vectors, etc. Dr. Georgieva submitted a total of 34 publications, 11 of which related to the dissertation work and 23 to the current competition. Of the articles related to the "Associate Professor" competition, 21 were published in peer-reviewed and indexed journals with IF or SJR, 1 - in a journal without IF and SJR, and 1 is a book chapter. The total IF of the publications is 47.475. All of them are collective papers, in one of them Dr. Georgieva is the lead and corresponding author, in 4 she has the same contribution as the lead author and in 2 she is the corresponding author. Thirty-three of the publications presented have been cited a total of 670 times, with 660 of the citations being in peer-reviewed and indexed international scientific journals with IF. This extremely high citation rate in journals indexed in Web of Science and Scopus reflects the positive resonance and influence of the developments in the international scientific community. Dr. Georgieva participated in 23 international scientific forums in the field of parasitology and related sciences held in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Romania, Canada, Mexico, Spain, South Africa, Germany, South Korea, Denmark, France and the USA. She worked on 27 projects funded by various Bulgarian and foreign sources, 5 of which were individual projects, and to 8 of which she was the leader. One of her strongest qualities is her mastery and successful implementation of the so-called integrative taxonomic approach, which combines morphological, molecular-genetic and ecological methods in the study of helminths from the target groups. As a result of her work to date, Simona Georgieva has formulated 23 contributions, among which I would like to emphasise the description of two new genera and 14 new to science helminth species, the preparation of a key for the identification of the cercariae and adult stages of the trematodes of *Echinostoma* spp. based on light microscopy and the application of a range of light microscopic techniques when working with living material, the preparation of keys for the identification of species of the genus *Diplostomum* based on light and scanning electron microscopy of individual helminth stages, and further keys for the species identification of trematodes based on the combination of morphological features and molecular markers for differentiation. Dr. Georgieva has extensive teaching experience, she led practical exercises for students at the University of South Bohemia (Czech Republic) and the University of Valencia (Spain) in the disciplines "Biology of Helminths", "Parasitology", "Ichthyology" and "Biodiversity: Conservation and Evolution ", she was supervisor/co-supervisor of 2 doctoral, 4 master's and one bachelor's theses, as well as a mentor of a large number of students within various mobility and cooperation programs.

Dr. Georgieva has met the state minimum requirements and the BAS requirements for tenure for the position of "Associate Professor", and the ratio between the minimum points

required and the points she achieved in each indicator is as follows: A 50/50, B 100/175, G 220 /260, D 60/1340. She also met the specific criteria for the position of "Associate Professor" according to the Regulations for the conditions and procedure for acquiring scientific degrees and academic positions at IBER-BAS. Comments on the competition documents: There is a discrepancy between the publication numbers in the file with the list and the folder with the copies, the total number of points for indicator G is not correctly reflected in the compliance report.

Conclusion

Dr. Simona Georgieva is an established specialist in the field of taxonomy and evolution of flatworms from the class Trematoda. She has good communication, teamwork and mentoring skills; she shows activity in initiating and developing scientific projects; she has produced high quality scientific production with high international citations, and the scientometric indicators reflecting her work exceed state requirements, the requirements of the BAS and the criteria of the SC of the Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Studies. This gives me reason to vote positively for her ranking in the competition and I propose that she be elected as "Associate Professor" in professional field 4.3. Biological sciences, scientific specialty "Parasitology and helminthology".

28.11.2024

Sofia

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