

**OPINION**

by Prof. Dr. **Dragan Petrov Chobanov**

Place of work: Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research at the BAS  
Chairman of the Scientific Jury, appointed by Order No. 112 / 28.12.2023 of the Director of the  
Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research, BAS

**Subject:** competition for the position of **associate professor** in the specialty “**Ecology and Ecosystem Conservation**“ for the needs of the Research group “Fauna, Taxonomy and Ecology of Invertebrates”, Section “Biodiversity and Ecology of Invertebrates”, Department “Animal Diversity and Resources”, Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research, announced in SG No. 92 / 03.11.2023

Only one candidate appeared at the announced competition - Dr. **Teodora Marius Teofilova**, chief assistant at IBER-BAS.

The candidate, Dr. Teofilova, completed a Bachelor's degree in Ecology and Ecosystem Protection and a Master's degree in Rural Ecology at the University of Forestry, Sofia. She completed doctoral studies at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” in 2014, and since 2015 is a chief assistant at IBER-BAS.

Dr. Teofilova's scientific output includes studies that are diverse in terms of methodology and taxonomic focus, with the focus being on the distribution and some ecological features of the beetles of the Carabidae family. In her scientific output, the candidate lists 76 titles, while the title under number 46 represents a correction (erratum) of publication #44, which is why it should not be considered a separate title. By subtracting the relevant title, the candidate is the author of 75 scientific articles, of which 39 in publications with an impact factor (IF) and/or a Scopus citation index (SJR). Of Dr. Teofilova's works, 45 mainly concern the Carabidae family (25 with IF or SJR). The candidate is first or single author in over 67% of her scientific output, which shows initiative and confidence in formulating scientific hypotheses, conducting scientific experiments and preparing scientific works. On the other hand, a significant part of the articles reflect studies with a limited geographic or taxonomic scope, which is probably why they were published in regional and/or non-specialized journals with a low rating. For the cited sources under numbers 57 and 58, only the titles differ and the information should be supplemented. The order of

presentation of the publications, both in the habilitation reference and in places in the list of publications (e.g. numbers 37-39), is not logical. When searching in Scopus, the affiliation Nikola Vaptsarov Naval Academy and 41 documents appear for Teodora Marius Teofilova, which is clearly the result of an error. Seven documents are visible in the author's profile in ORCID.

In the current competition, Teodora Teofilova participated with 25 publications, of which seven were assigned to the habilitation work (four with IF and three only with SJR). The candidate is the first or sole author of six of the seven publications that have a similar theme, clearly shaping the habilitation work. In point D7, nine publications have IF / SJR .

The candidate has listed 34 citations of 18 publications for the competition, which form 68 points.

Dr. Teofilova's research has a well-defined thematic and methodological profile. The candidate's contributions may be classified into faunistics, general-ecological, ecological-faunistic with a conservation focus, and methodological in relation to the ecology of Carabidae. In the publications for the competition, several new species of beetles (for Bulgaria and Romania) and dipterans (for Bulgaria) are reported, with the majority of contributions having a more limited geographical focus.

I accept the reference for the scientometric indicators presented by Dr. Teofilova for participation in the competition. I believe that it fully meets the national criteria, as well as the criteria of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and IBER. The habilitation work is made up of works with a predominance of main authorship of the candidate.

In addition to fulfilling the scientometric criteria, the candidate has submitted a reference for participation in 18 scientific and applied projects, of which she led one, and an impressive number of 80 conference participations, as well as additional certificates.

**Recommendations to the candidate.** I would recommend the candidate to continue active publishing, aiming to significantly increase the visibility of their research and focus on publishing in WoS/Scopus first and second quartile journals. In the scientific production outside the competition, interesting studies with a contribution regarding the phenotypic variation in relation to the environmental conditions are noticed, which have the potential to increase the visibility of the scientific works of the candidate. Delving into the phenotypic variability in terms of different factors would also contribute to the elaboration of new contributions to Carabid conservation. I advise the candidate to increase the visibility of her scientific output by including her ORCID number in the articles, as well as to inquire about the unclear information in Scopus. Also, as an

Associate Professor, I hope that Dr. Teofilova will focus on supervision of scientific projects and get involved in the training of young specialists and doctoral students in IBER.

**Conclusion:** Doctor Teofilova is a focused and productive scientist who contributes significantly to the scientific output of our research unit. She participates in numerous studies, scientific forums and practical activities. The candidate is the author of a scientific production that sufficiently meets the criteria for holding the academic position of associate professor. Hence, I give a high assessment of the scientific results of the candidate and recommend the Scientific Jury and the Scientific Council of IBER-BAS to approve the selection of chief assistant Dr. Theodora Marius Teofilova for the academic position of associate professor in the specialty “Ecology and Ecosystem Protection“.

February 28, 2024

Sofia

(D. Chobanov)