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STATEMENT

on the competition for the academic position of "Professor" in the professional field "4.3. Biological Sciences", scientific specialty "Ecology and Ecosystem Conservation" for the needs of the section "Ecology of Associations and Conservation Biology" at the Department "Ecosystem Research, Ecological Risk and Conservation Biology" of IBEI-BAS

by Dr. Prof. Zlatozar Boev, DSc. in the Department of "Vertebrates" at the National Museum of Natural History at BAS

Only one candidate submitted regular documents for the competition within the legally announced deadline (announcement in the State Gazette, issue 21/14.03.2025) - Assoc. Prof. Dr. Borislav Yassenov Naumov, scientist at the Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (IBEI-BAS). Since 2017 he is employed as an associate professor in the Department of "Ecosystem Research, Ecological Risk and Conservation Biology" at IBEI-BAS. This review is in implementation of order No. 44/09.05.2025 of the Director of IBEI-BAS.

1. General data on the candidate's career and thematic development

The candidate is 54 years old and has 19 years of work experience at BAS. He received his "Master's" diploma at the Faculty of Biology at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (1995), and his "PhD" in "Ecology and Conservation of Ecosystems" - in 2012. Since 2019, he has been the head of the "Ecology of Associations and Conservation Biology" section at IBEI-BAS. He is the scientific supervisor of two successfully defended PhD students in the field of herpetology.

2. Main fields of the candidate's research work and most important scientific contributions

The main scientific contributions of Assoc. Prof. B. Naumov are in two major zoological fields – batrachology and herpetology. He groups his contributions into 5 fields regarding the study of amphibians and reptiles in Bulgaria: (1) ecology and faunistics; (2) taxonomy and phylogeny; (3) morphology and methodology; (4) chemical communication; (5) pathology. I find such a grouping insufficiently justified. I believe that "directions" 1, 2 and especially 3 should have been presented separately, even if there is one published study in each, and his research is sufficient for the separate identification of these fields.

There are contributions, but another field has been omitted – (6) conservation biology. Let us not forget that the competition is announced in the scientific specialty "Ecology and Ecosystem Conservation". This direction includes the works with numbers: 23, 24 29, 32, 34 and 46, which contain important results directly related to the conservation of species.

3. Significance of the obtained results, proven by citations, publications in prestigious journals, awards, membership in international and national scientific bodies, etc.

The research was conducted at a modern scientific level (both fieldwork and data processing and analysis) and the results are widely accepted by the global scientific community in the field. This is also indicated by the 180 citations found in total (excluding auto- and hidden auto-citations) of 48 of his publications. All his works, according to the data in Researchgate (22.05.2025), have been cited a total of 602 times, and his h-index is 12. After Google Scholar they are 877, and the h-index – 13. This clearly proves that his name as a serious researcher is not only recognizable, but also widely accepted by the global scientific community. According to this indicator, he ranks 978th in the country (among the best 1000 Bulgarian scientists): <https://bg.h-index.com/bg/author/u4qYoxUAAAAJ>.

49 scientific publications have been submitted under the current competition, in 7 (14.3%) of which the candidate is the leading first co-author. This does not seem much, given the announced competition for academic degree "Professor". In 20 works, Assoc. Prof. B. Naumov is the second co-author in the research teams. There are no independent publications (on the competition), but most of them have been published in specialized peer-reviewed international journals with an impact factor.

4. Most significant scientific and applied achievements, outlining their social significance

The establishment of new previously unknown localities of a number of species of amphibians and reptiles with a high conservation status has important applied (for nature conservation) significance for the preservation of biological diversity in many regions of the country. Obtaining new knowledge about the biology and ecology of such species, in addition to being applied, also has a fundamental character.

The establishment of a new species of vertebrate animal for the fauna of Bulgaria is a serious faunal contribution. Such is the finding (in co-authorship) of the Common wall gecko (*Tarentola mauritanica*), which is also from a new family for our country – Phyllodactylidae.

5. Demonstrated skills or aptitude for leading scientific research (project management, attracted external funding, etc.).

The candidate has been a leader/participant in 13 scientific research projects, mainly of a conservation nature, and has been a leader and co-leader in two projects. Indirect evidence that the candidate has the qualities to lead scientific projects is their final products – dozens of publications in prestigious international journals, cited hundreds of times by scientists all over the world.

6. Profile of scientific research work

The candidate's profile (batrachology and herpetology) is very clearly outlined by the topics of scientific papers, scientific projects, by the profile of the journals in which he has published or been cited, as well as by the topics of the dissertations defended under his scientific supervision.

All of them fall entirely within the field of professional direction "4.3. Biological Sciences", scientific specialty "Ecology and Conservation of ecosystems". In addition to reptiles and amphibians, the candidate's research subjects are also some birds from Bulgaria.

7. Role of the candidate in the training of young scientists

Assoc. Prof. B. Naumov has two successfully defended doctoral theses, received the ONS "doctor" - Angel Dyugmedzhiev and Emilia Vacheva.

8. Motivated conclusion, unequivocally recommending the selection or not of the respective candidate

Table 1. Comparison of the values of groups of scientometric indicators of the candidate with the minimum requirements according to the PZRAS of IBEI-BAS

Group of indicators	Minimum value of the indicators according to the PZRAS of IBEI-BAS	Values of the indicators of the candidate Assoc. Prof. Dr. B. Naumov
A	50	50
B	100	153
Г	100	511
Д	100	360
Д	100	498
Е	150	193
Общо	600	1267

Based on the distinguished scientific, applied science and teaching contributions, I believe that Assoc. Prof. Borislav Yassenov Naumov fully meets and significantly (twice) exceeds (Table 1) the specified criteria for obtaining the academic position of "Professor" in the specialty "Ecology and ecosystem protection". His total score in points constitutes 211% of the required minimum. The materials submitted for the competition cover (and according to the adopted criteria of IBEI-BAS) all scientometric criteria.

Therefore, I strongly suggest that the esteemed Scientific Council of IBEI-BAS vote "yes" for the candidate to receive this academic position of "professor".

Sofia, 22.05.2025

Written by:

(Zlatozar Boev)