OPINION

on the competition for occupying the academic position of Professor in the field of higher education 6. "Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine", in the professional field 6.1. "Crop Science", specialty "Soil Science", announced in State Gazette No. 60 of July 25, 2025

Candidate: **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pavlina Naskova Atanasova**

Member of the scientific jury: **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petar Stoyanov Yankov**

1. General characteristics of the candidate's research and applied scientific activity.

For participation in the announced competition for the academic position of "Professor", Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pavlina Naskova has submitted scientific works in accordance with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), as follows:

- Diploma for the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (A1.1 – 50 points);
- One monograph titled "Modeling the Dynamics of Organic Substances and Heavy Metals in the Soil", meeting the requirements for a theoretical and practical research work (B3.1 – 100 points);
- indicators from group G – total 329.85 points:
  - ✓ Published book based on the defended doctoral dissertation entitled "Management of Heavy Metal Pollution in Natural, Agro-, and Urban Ecosystems" (G6.1 – 40 points);
  - ✓ 22 publications in refereed and indexed journals (G7 – 258.75 points);
  - ✓ 8 publications in non-refereed journals (G8 – 31.1 points).

The submitted scientific works do not duplicate those presented for obtaining the degree "Doctor" or for the academic position of "Associate Professor", thereby satisfying the requirements of Art. 29, items 3 and 4 of LDASRB.

Under indicator group D (100 points), the candidate presents a list of 25 citations (315 points), significantly exceeding the minimum requirement for this indicator.

For indicator group E, requiring a minimum of 100 points, the candidate accumulates 220 points, formed through the supervision of two defended PhD students, participation in national and international projects, and the publication of a textbook and teaching aids.

The above data clearly indicate the high level of research and applied scientific work of the candidate, thus meeting the requirements of Art. 29 (1), item 5 of LDASRB.

2. Evaluation of the candidate's pedagogical preparation and activity.

Assoc. Prof. Pavlina Naskova Atanasova meets the requirement of Art. 29, item 2 of LDASRB, as she has been part of the academic staff of the Department of Crop Science at the Faculty of Agrarian and Technical Sciences, Technical University of Varna since 2012.

Regarding the indicator "Number of lecture hours taught at TU-Varna over the past three years", the required minimum is 30 points. The data provided by the candidate show

that this minimum is exceeded more than twice (70.5 points). For participation in the development of curricula, the candidate presents evidence that exceeds the required minimum of 20 points by twofold.

Assoc. Prof. Atanasova is a co-author of three teaching aids and has supervised two successfully defended doctoral students. Her pedagogical competence and academic expertise are evident.

3. Main scientific and applied contributions.

The contributions include scientific, research-applied, applied, and teaching-methodological results that reveal new aspects of existing scientific theories, problems, and tasks.

Five scientific contributions are listed, among which particularly noteworthy are those proposing new methods for studying, predicting, and managing processes in soil ecosystems.

Fifteen applied-scientific contributions, two applied contributions, and two teaching-methodological contributions are formulated, encompassing core knowledge in soil science, current environmental issues, soil pollution, and technologies for soil remediation.

I accept all the contributions formulated by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pavlina Naskova in the works submitted for the competition for the position of "Professor". These contributions have scientific, applied, and methodological significance and meet the requirements of Art. 29 of LDASRB, as they enrich the existing scientific field with new knowledge.

4. Significance of the contributions for science and practice.

In my opinion, the volume and quality of the candidate's scientific, teaching, research, and applied activities fully satisfy the requirements for the academic position of "Professor."

The candidate has met all minimum quantitative indicators and has significantly exceeded some of them. She participates in the competition with 22 scientific publications in refereed and indexed journals in globally recognized scientific databases, and 8 publications in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or edited collective volumes.

The presented 14 citations in journals indexed in Scopus and/or Web of Science, 10 citations in monographs and peer-reviewed collective volumes, and one citation in a non-refereed peer-reviewed journal serve as proof of the quality and recognition of the candidate's research.

5. Critical remarks and recommendations.

I have no critical remarks toward the candidate that would challenge her main scientific, research-applied, or applied contributions.

I recommend that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pavlina Atanasova continue her work with doctoral students to further share her scientific experience.

CONCLUSION

Based on the presented scientific works, the candidate meets the quantitative indicators required by the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), and the Regulations for Academic Appointments at the Technical University of Varna.

Therefore, I give my positive evaluation and recommend that the esteemed scientific jury support the candidacy of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pavlina Naskova Atanasova for the academic position of Professor in the field of higher education 6. "Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine", professional field 6.1. "Crop Science", specialty "Soil Science".

Заличена информация
по Регламент (ЕС)
2016/679

11 November 2025
Varna

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