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ЛЕСОТЕХНИЧЕСКИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ ГОРСКО СТОПАНСТВО
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REVIEW

by Prof. Dr. Alexander Nikolov Tashev
University of Forestry – Sofia

regarding the materials submitted by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Violeta Georgieva Dimitrova (University of Forestry – Sofia) for participation in a competition for the academic position of "Professor" in the field of higher education 6. Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, professional field 6.5. Forestry, scientific specialty "Silviculture (including Dendrology)." The competition was announced for the Department of Dendrology to cover the subject "Botany" and was published in the *State Gazette*, Issue 65/17.07.2026, as well as on the University of Forestry website on 30.06.2026.
Procedure Code: FOR – P-0626-211

1. Brief Biographical Data on the Candidate

Violeta Georgieva Dimitrova was born on February 27, 1976. In 1999, she graduated with a Master's degree in Ecology and Environmental Protection from the University of Forestry (LTU) in Sofia. From 1999 to 2000, she worked as an ecologist for the Kremikovtsi District of the Sofia Municipality. From 2000 to 2007, she served as a Senior Expert in the "Preventive Activities" Directorate (within the EIA and SEA Department) and as a Senior Expert in the "National Nature Protection Service" Directorate (within the Natura 2000 Department) at the Ministry of Environment and Water (MOEW). Between 2003 and 2007, she was a PhD student in the "Functional Ecology" section of the Central Laboratory of General Ecology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS), specializing in "Ecology and Ecosystem Conservation." Her doctoral thesis was titled "Assessment of the structure, functional state, and degradation processes in Sweet Chestnut (Castanea sativa Mill.) ecosystems in the Belasitsa region, with a view to their sustainable management." From 2007 to 2018, she worked as a Chief Assistant Professor in the subject of Botany within the Department of Dendrology at the University of Forestry in Sofia. In 2018, she attained the academic rank of Associate Professor and currently holds this position within the same department.

2. General Description of the Submitted Materials

For her participation in the competition, the candidate, Violeta Georgieva Dimitrova, has submitted a total of 23 scientific publications. These include:

- ✓ An abstract of a dissertation for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" (PhD) – 1 item;
- ✓ A published monograph, submitted as the primary habilitation work – 1 item;
- ✓ Books – 2 items;

- ✓ Publications in refereed and indexed scientific journals, series, and conference proceedings (Web of Science and SCOPUS) – 13 items;
- ✓ Articles and papers published in non-refereed, peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes – 6 items.
- ✓ The research, applied-research, educational, and infrastructure projects submitted for the competition total 15, including:
- ✓ Research projects funded by the University of Forestry (LTU) under Ordinance No. 9 – 4 items;
- ✓ National research projects – 6 items;
- ✓ Applied-research projects – 3 items;
- ✓ National educational projects – 1 item;
- ✓ Applied-research projects funded by the University Training and Experimental Forestry Units (UOEGS) of the University of Forestry (LTU) – 1 item.
- ✓ The citations submitted for the competition total 38, including:
- ✓ Citations in refereed and indexed scientific journals, series, and conference proceedings (Web of Science and SCOPUS) – 16 items;
- ✓ Citations in non-indexed, peer-reviewed scientific journals or in edited collective volumes – 22.

The 23 publications, project participations, and citations that have been assigned points can be classified as follows:

- under indicator A – 1 item – 50 points;
- under indicator B3 – 100 points;
- under indicator G6 – 1 item – 40 points;
- under indicator G7 – 168.5 points;
- under indicator G8 – 26.6 points;
- under indicator G11 – 1 item – 10 points;
- under indicator D13 – citations – 195 points;
- under indicator D14 – citations – 110 points;
- under indicator D15 – citations – 30 points;
- under indicator E18 – 105 points;
- under indicator E20 – 90 points;
- under indicator E22 – 1 item – 20 points;

Total: 945.1 points, against a required minimum of 550 points.
Publications in scientific journals:

- in foreign refereed journals – 3 items;
- in Bulgarian refereed journals – 10 items;
- in non-refereed journals – 6 items;

By place of publication:

- Articles in foreign journals – 6 items;
- Papers in proceedings of international scientific forums – 1 item;
- Articles in national journals – 11 items;

- Papers in scientific proceedings of universities and institutes – 1 item;

Language of publication:

- In Bulgarian – 4 items; • In a foreign language – 19;

Number of co-authors:

- Sole-authored – 3;
- With one co-author – 12;
- With two co-authors – 4;
- With three or more co-authors – 4.

3. Impact of the candidate's scientific publications in the literature

For the current competition, the candidate has presented 38 citations: 16 citations in refereed and indexed scientific journals, serial publications, and conference proceedings (Web of Science and SCOPUS), and 22 citations in non-refereed journals with scientific peer review or in edited collective volumes.

4. General Overview of the Candidate's Activities:

4.1. Teaching and Pedagogical Activities

The candidate has a significant record of teaching and pedagogical work, which constitutes part of her official duties. She delivers lectures and conducts practical exercises in the following subjects: Botany, Medical Botany (in both Bulgarian and English), Conservation of Flora and Vegetation, and Conservation of Floristic Diversity. Over the past five years, her annual teaching load has ranged from 337 to 500 hours in Bulgarian and from 70 to 100 hours in English. She has authored or co-authored 5 curricula for various academic disciplines. Additionally, she has served on 10 academic juries and committees.

4.2. Scientific, Scientific-Applied, and Applied Contributions

The contributions presented by the candidate for the competition are the result of research that can be summarized in the following areas:

4.2.I. Scientific Contributions

- The floristic composition of technogenic terrains—such as coal mining spoil heaps, technosols at a quartz quarry, areas surrounding quarries for the extraction of construction aggregates, and eroded lands—has been investigated.
- The quantity, structure, and chemical composition of litterfall in beech forests have been determined, along with its role as a reservoir for chemical elements.
- The chemical composition and nutrient reserves within various types of dead wood (standing dead trees, fallen logs, and stumps) in beech forests across different Bulgarian mountains have been established.
- The conservation status of all medicinal plants within the Bulgarian flora has been assessed and analyzed.
- Ecological aspects of oak ecosystems in Bulgaria—dominated by Quercus cerris L. and Q. frainetto Ten.—have been studied, covering their flora, structure,

and functionality (including productivity, chemical composition, the intensity of the biological cycle, and the caloric value of phytomass fractions).

4.2.2. Scientific and Applied Contributions

- It has been established that the species *Achillea millefolium* L. is suitable for the phytoremediation of sites contaminated by mining activities;
- An ecosystem-based approach was applied to study degradation processes in chestnut forests. Key structural and functional ecosystem characteristics, their dynamics, and their significance for the condition of chestnut forests were examined. These data are expected to contribute to the future sustainable and adaptive management of these forest resources;
- The floristic diversity in anthropogenically impacted areas of the "Ostritsa" Protected Zone was characterized, and species requiring conservation were identified, with the aim of subsequently collecting plant material for *in vitro* and *in vivo* propagation experiments;
- Stocks of dead wood (standing, lying, and stumps) and their decomposition stages were determined in beech forests across various mountains in Western Bulgaria. These stocks were evaluated in the context of the conservation status of the habitats;
- Below-ground phytomass stocks of major forest-forming tree species in Bulgaria were determined;
- Information is presented regarding the full composition of medicinal plants within the Bulgarian flora, along with characteristics of their taxonomic structure and classification based on biological type, life form, floristic geoelements, flowering period, and ecological groups. • The medicinal plants within the territory of the "Petrohan" Training and Experimental Forestry Enterprise (UEGS "Petrohan") have been identified, and their ecological characteristics, taxonomic structure, and classification—based on biological type, life form, and geoelement—are presented. Information is provided regarding the usable plant parts, the biologically active substances they contain, and their therapeutic effects.

4.2.3. Applied Contributions

The conservation status of habitats 91M0, 91H0, 91AA, and 9530 was assessed in the protected zone BG0001043 “Etropole – Baylovo”; 9170 and 91M0 in the protected zone BG0000165 “Lozenska Planina”; 9130 in the protected zone BG0001013 “Skrino”; 9530 in the protected zone BG0001022 “Oranovski Prolom – Leshko”; 9410 in the protected zone BG0001028 “Sreden Pirin – Alibotush”; 91BA, 91CA, and 9110 in the protected zone BG0000366 “Kresna – Ilindentsi”; 9260 in the protected zone BG0000167 “Belasitsa”; 91W0 in the protected zone BG0000224 “Ograzhden – Maleshevo”; and 5210 in the protected zone BG0001021 “Reka Mesta”.

5. Assessment of the Candidate’s Personal Contribution

The materials submitted by the candidate indicate that she has 3 sole-authored publications, 12 publications with one co-author, 4 with two co-authors, and 4 with three or more co-authors. In 12 of the submitted publications, the candidate is the first author; in 6, she is the second author; and so on. These data demonstrate Assoc. Prof. Dimitrova's capacity for both independent work and collaboration within a team.

6. Critical Remarks

The following critical remarks may be made regarding the submitted materials:

1. The candidate for the position of Professor in "Botany" has not submitted a single publication in a botanical journal for the competition! The majority of the publications—including the doctoral thesis, two books, and most of the articles—fall within the field of ecology and appear in ecological journals. This trend is also evident in the bulk of the contributions presented.
2. The candidate does not have a single publication in a journal with an impact factor.
3. The journal *Journal of Balkan Ecology* (ISSN: 1311-0527) is not indexed in the Scopus database, contrary to what is indicated for two of the publications submitted by the candidate for the competition. This also affects the scoring.
https://www.google.com/search?q=%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%84%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B8%D1%80%D0%B0+%D0%BB%D0%B8+%D1%81%D0%B5+%D1%81%D0%BF%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%BE+Journal+of+Balkan+Ecology+%D0%B2+Scopus&rlz=1C1GCEA_enBG1109BG1110&oq=%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%84%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B8%D1%80%D0%B0+%D0%BB%D0%B8+%D1%81%D0%B5+%D1%81%D0%BF%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%BE+Journal+of+Balkan+Ecology+%D0%B2+Scopus&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOTIHCAEQABjvBTIHCAIQABjvBTIKCAMQABiABBiiBDIHCAQQABjvBTIHCAUQABjvBdIBCjQ2ODg0ajBqMTWoAgCwAgA&sourceid=chrome&source=chrome.rb&ie=UTF-8
4. There is not a single article in a quartile higher than Q4.
5. Several of the scientific-applied contributions read like summaries of the corresponding publications, outlining the methodological approaches used in these studies.
6. I recommend that Assoc. Prof. Violeta Dimitrova devote more attention to botanical research in her future work.

7. Personal impressions of the candidate.

I have known Violeta Georgieva Dimitrova since her time as a student, having served as her lecturer. She was a strong student who conscientiously fulfilled her academic obligations. This same diligence was evident in her work as a lecturer in the Department of Dendrology. We collaborated on several publications

concerning medicinal plants within the Bulgarian flora, as well as on a textbook on "Medical Botany" for students majoring in Veterinary Medicine.

8. Conclusion

The documents and materials submitted by Assoc. Prof. Dr. **Violeta Georgieva Dimitrova** meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Regulations for its implementation, and the Regulations of the University of Forestry (LTU) – Sofia. Furthermore, the scientometric indicators satisfy the criteria for the academic position of "Professor." On this basis, I express my **positive assessment and recommend that the esteemed members of the Scientific Jury vote in favor of awarding her the academic position of "Professor"** in Professional Field 6.5 Forestry, under the scientific specialty "Silviculture, including Dendrology."

October 27, 2026

Jury Member:
/Pr

