

S T A T E M E N T

REGARDING: Competition for the academic position "Associated Professor", Professional field 4.3. Biological Sciences, (Microbiology), announced in the State Gazette issue 47/22.05.2020

FROM: Assoc. Prof. Svetla Danova, PhD, DSc, Department of General microbiology, Laboratory of microbial genetics, The Stephan Angeloff Institute of Microbiology, BAS

1. REGARDING THE COMPETITION:

The Competition for the occupation of the academic position "Associated Professor", Scientific field - Biological Sciences (Microbiology) was announced in the State Gazette issue 47/22.05.2020 for the needs of the Department of Infectious microbiology, Laboratory of molecular biology of mycobacteria, The Stephan Angeloff Institute of Microbiology (SAIM), BAS.

The Scientific Jury was determined by the Order of the Director of SAIM No I-84/01.07.2020 according to the Law of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its application.

As a member of the Scientific Jury, I declare that I have no common publications, projects or any form of conflict of interests according to the p.1, items 3 and 5 of the Law of the Development of the Academic Compositions in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its application with the candidate.

2. BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT THE CANDIDATE IN THE COMPETITION:

The only candidate in the competition is Dr. Violeta Valcheva Ruseva. Presently, she is assistant professor in the Department of Infectious Microbiology, Laboratory of molecular biology of mycobacteria, The Stephan Angeloff Institute of Microbiology, BAS. She was graduated as a Bachelor; specialty "Biotechnology" in 2003 with a subsequent Master's degree in "Microbiology and Microbiological Control", both at the Faculty of Biology at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". In the Institute of Microbiology, BAS she started working as a biologist (for the period 11/2004 -7/2005 year) followed by PhD student (2005 – 2008 year) and from 10/2009 year till now she is assistant professor in the Department of Infectious microbiology in the same Institute.

She has specialized 6 times in world-famous research centers (Institut Pasteur - Saint Petersburg, China, France), with a total duration of 18 months for 7 years, entirely focused on the problems of molecular characteristics of infectious agents - mycobacteria and drug resistance of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. The presented CV shows excellent trainings in Bioinformatics, genomic and phylogenetic analysis, based on 9 courses and international training programs, which is important for the modern microbiological research in the laboratory for which the competition was announced.

I know the candidate personally from her student years, as her assistant in the General Microbiology course of the Bachelor's program at the Faculty of Biology at Sofia University. She demonstrated a profound interest in experimental work and modern microbiological research. The lasting interest in the current problems of infectious microbiology is evident in her academic career so far.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ACADEMIC POSITION "ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR"

The only candidate for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the competition presents documentation including all necessary indicators on the implementation of the national criteria of the Law of the Development of the Academic Compositions in the Republic of Bulgaria. According to the Rules of the SAIM, BAS, the candidate submitted list of 24 scientific publications, citations from Scopus and Web of Science, list of projects and scientific directions and contributions. She has more than 12 years research experience in the same department and laboratory, where competition has been announced.

3.1. Compliance of the minimum national requirements according to the Law

The analysis of the materials submitted by the candidate Assis. Prof. Violeta Ruseva shows that she not only covers but significantly exceeds the national criteria as follows:

- **According to the Group A, Indicator 1– 50 points** – The candidate received the educational and scientific degree "PhD" (01.06.12 Microbiology) in 2009, successfully defending a dissertation on the Molecular genetic characterization of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* strains, isolated from different regions of Bulgaria" in front of the Specialized Scientific Council of microbiology, virology and immunology at the High Attestation Commission

- **According to the Group B, Indicator 4** were submitted 6 publications between 2010-2020 in the peer reviewed international journals with high IF with total 125 points from 100

required. Dr. Violeta Valcheva is a first author in 3 of them, indexed scientific papers (with ISI IF), which indicates her personal contribution.

- **According to the Group C, Indicator 7 and 8** were submitted 2 chapters in international books and 10 scientific publications with IF with total 237 points from 200 required. All scientific papers are co-authored and are in peer reviewed international journals.

- **According to the Group D, Indicator 11** – the candidate gives 241 citations (Scopus and Web of Science) which are 482 points with a minimum of 50 points required.

3.2. Compliance of the additional requirements for academic positions at the Stephan Angeloff Institute of Microbiology, BAS

The candidate Violeta Valcheva Ruseva successfully covers all indicators in terms of number of citations (241), Impact factor (40,295) and project activity she presents twice as high as necessary. She participates in the competition with a total of 24 scientific papers, in 7 of them 1st author, 16 are with impact factor (IF), 4 are without impact factor (IF), but with SJR, 2 chapters in international books and 1 article published in full text in a congress proceedings. The articles are in 5 thematic areas, in the field of infectious microbiology and fully consistent with the direction of the competition and the department, as follows:

- (1) *Identification and molecular epidemiology of tuberculosis in animals*
- (2) *Prevalence of paratuberculosis in wild animals in Bulgaria*
- (3) *Molecular epidemiology, drug resistance, phylogenetics and evolution of Mycobacterium tuberculosis in Bulgaria and around the world*
- (4) *Establishment of L-forms in mycobacteria and staphylococci*
- (5) *Development of new compounds with antitubercular activity*

From the scientific publications to each of these areas can be clearly seen the original scientific contributions and those of confirmatory and methodological nature, which prove that the candidate is a molecular microbiologist with qualifications and experience with the need of the investigations of the Department of Infectious microbiology.

I give high-level assessment to the first molecular genetic study for Bulgaria in the field of animal husbandry, on the genetic diversity of *Mycobacterium bovis* strains circulating in Bulgaria, the detection of the circulation of *Mycobacterium caprae* strains, a comprehensive study for paratuberculosis among wild animals as a reservoir of these infectious agents and the optimization of the molecular genetic method (spoligotyping) for identification and typing of L-forms of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* strains.

In this regard, I would like to mark actively participation of Dr. Violeta Ruseva in 14 interdisciplinary national and international projects, including and those under the 7th Framework Program, NATO and COST. In 2 of them she is a project leader, and in 3 co-project leader for the implementation of the research programs. Therefore, in addition as excellent researcher, she has the qualities to prepare and lead the projects. At the same time, she successfully partnerships with other scientific institutes in Bulgaria and abroad, which is very important for the development of the research programs in the Department in which she works. She actively presents the obtained results, shown by the list of 44 participations in national and international scientific forums.

CONCLUSION

All above, gives me the reason to believe that Assist. Prof. Violeta Valcheva Ruseva is a highly qualified molecular microbiologist, who has proven her ability to conduct scientific research at a high level.

In conclusion I would like to recommend to the Scientific Jury and Scientific board of the SAIM to support the candidature of Assist. Prof. Violeta Valcheva Ruseva as **Associate Professor** in the professional field 4.3 Biological Sciences (specialty “Microbiology”), announced for the needs of the Department of Infectious microbiology, Laboratory "Molecular Biology of Mycobacteria", the Stephan Angeloff Institute of Microbiology, BAS.

11.09.2020

Sofia

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Assoc. Prof. Svetla Danova, PhD, DSc