

## ATTITUDE OF REVIEWER

by Associate Professor Rositsa Svetolik Milcheva, PhD

Institute of Experimental Morphology, Pathology and Anthropology with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

**Re:** Competition for the academic position “Professor” in the professional field 4.3. Life sciences, specialty “Biochemistry” of the Institute of Experimental Morphology, Pathology and Anthropology with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, announced in the Newspaper of State No. 81/03.10.2025.

In the current competition for the academic position of “Professor”, documents have been submitted by one candidate – Ivan Angelov Iliev, PhD, Associate Professor in the Department of Pathology at IEMPAM-BAS. The candidate has submitted detailed and precisely prepared documentation of an active and time-proven scientist.

Assoc. Prof. Ivan Iliev completed his higher education at the Faculty of Biology of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, specialty Molecular Biology. After completing his higher education, he joined the Institute of Experimental Pathology and Parasitology – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (at the presence IEMPAM) as a research associate III degree, in the Department of Immunology. He also has one work of experience at the Institute of Molecular Biology – BAS. During his rich research career, assoc. Prof. Iliev has been engaged in scientific research in the fields of pathology, parasitology, immunology, molecular biology, and biochemistry. In December 2011, the candidate defended a doctoral dissertation on with a title “Study of immunomodulatory properties of hemocyanins isolated from *Helic lucorum* and *Rapana venosa* in experimental immunotherapy of Graffi’s myeloid tumor, Guerin’s ascites tumor and trichinellosis”. The topic of the dissertation work complies with the subject of the announced competition.

The candidate participates in the competition with:

1. Habilitation thesis, consisting of 10 scientific publications in journals that are referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information (Web of Science and Scopus), as follows: 6 articles with Q1, 3 articles with Q3 and 1 article with Q2. The scientific papers from this group have been published in reputed journals in the field of Biochemistry – Amino Acids, Molecules, Journal of Chemical Technology and Metallurgi, Protein and Peptide Letters, Pharmaceutics, Current Research in Biotechnology;
2. List of 23 scientific publications in journals that are referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information (Web of Science and Scopus), as follows: 9 articles with Q1, 6 articles with Q2, 5 articles with Q3 and 3 articles with Q4. The scientific works of this group have again been published in various reputed journals in the fields of Biochemistry and Biotechnology, Molecular biology and Pharmacology: Biotechnology and Biotechnological Equipment, Current Research in Biotechnology, International Journal of

Molecular Sciences, Coating, Molecules, International Journal of Bioautomation, Bulgarian Chemical Communications, Biomedicines, Journal of Ethnopharmacology, Separations, International Journal of Molecular Sciences, Current Issues in Molecular Biology.

The diverse topics of the candidate's scientific works testify to his excellent teamwork skills, as well as flexibility and interdisciplinarity in his research.

For the needs of the competition, the candidate has provided a list of 86 participations in scientific forums, either in the country or abroad, as well as 257 citations in scientific publication, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information (Web of Science и Scopus). The number of the cited scientific papers, 38, is an indicator of the exceptional interest of the international scientific community in the research work of Assoc. Prof. Iliev.

Assoc. Prof. Iliev also develops intensive educational activities, consisted by lecturing to undergraduates and PhD students, as well as conducting exercises. The candidate is the titular of a training "Cultivation of Animal Cells" at the Educational Center of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Under his tutoring, 7 defences of diploma theses and 1 defence of a doctoral dissertation have been successfully accomplished.

The project activity of Assoc. Prof. Iliev is also impressive. For the period 2009-2027, he participated in a total of 17 scientific projects with diverse topics and goals, 3 of which are ongoing. Assoc. Prof. Iliev was also involved as a participant in two projects under the Operational Program "Human Resources Development". In association with his project activities, Assoc. Prof. Iliev has established and developed long-term professional contacts with number of national scientific institutions and Universities – Institute of Electronics, Institute of Polymers, Institute of Molecular Biology, and Institute of Biophysics and Biomedical Engineering at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, as well as with the Forestry University and the University of Chemical Technology and Metallurgy.

According to the provided report of Fullfilment of the minimum requirements of IEMPAM-BAS for Applying to the Competition for "Professor", it is clear that Assoc. Prof. Iliev participated in the competition with the following achieved results:

1. Total 50 points (with a minimum required number of 50 ) in Indicator Group A;
2. Total 215 points (with a minimum required number of 100) in Indicator Group V;
3. Total 481 points (with a minimum required number of 220) in Indicator Group G;
4. Total 514 points (with a minimum required number of 120) in Indicator Group D;
5. Total 190 points (with a minimum required number of 150) in Indicator Group E.

In summary, the results of the activities of Assoc. Prof. Iliev exceed the minimum required threshold of 640 points in total across all criteria by 810 points.

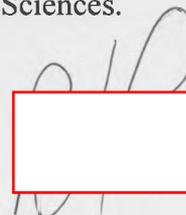
The research activity of Assoc. Prof. Iliev has a clearly outlined profile in the field of Biochemistry, Biophysics and Cell biology. A major part of the candidate's work is aims to estimate the biological activity of newly synthesized substances and natural products, as well as the combined effects of already well-studied compounds, under *in vitro* and *in vivo* conditions. In the process of work, a cell collection of 12 normal and 19 tumor cell lines was created. Two new cell lines was created and characterized, which were successfully used for *in vitro*

experiments. For the first time in Bulgaria, the *in vitro* method BALB 3T3 Neutral Red Uptake test to LED – solar simulator HeliosiO was introduced and adapted for testing the safety of new chemical substances. The relevance of this topic is increasing, as more new compounds are being synthesized and isolated worldwide, which need to be tested in order to preserve health and improve the quality of life. The assessment of the biological impact of the tested substances was carried out on model biological systems (various types of tumor and normal cell lines and experimental animals).

**Conclusion:** Based on the provided materials concerning this competition I find that Assoc. Prof. Ivan Angelov Iliev is impressively established scientist in the field of Cell biology and Biochemistry, with a focus on oncovirology, experimental oncology, virology and development of biocompatible coatings. Based on his research, original fundamental and applied scientific contributions of great importance to human medicine in the development of innovative approaches for the diagnosis and therapy of diseases have been obtained. The scientific production of the candidate not only exceeds significantly the minimal requirements, but it is well appreciated by the international scientific community, too. Assoc. Prof. Iliev also proves to be an extremely productive mentor and tutor, and his participation in a large number of projects is a testament to his teamwork skills and the establishment of long-standing collaborations with other research institutions. I consider that Assoc. Prof. Ivan Angelov Iliev fully meets the requirements of the relevant regulatory documents for holding the academic position of “Professor” in the specialty “Biochemistry”. In connection with the above, I strongly recommend to the esteemed Scientific Jury to vote positively the selection of Assoc. Prof. Ivan Angelov Iliev, PhD for the position “Professor” at the Department of Pathology in the professional field 4.3. Life sciences, specialty “Biochemistry” of the Institute of Experimental Morphology, Pathology and Anthropology with Museum. Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

17.02.2026

Signature:



Assoc. Prof. Roitsa Svetolik Milcheva, PhD