

To the members of the scientific jury
Defined by Order No. 80/ 16.03.2026
of Director of NCIPD

O P I N I O N

OF

Prof. Dr. Iva Stefanova Christova, MD, Ph.D., D.Sc.
National Center of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases

Competition

Academic position "PROFESSOR"

Field of higher education 4 "Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics"
Professional direction 4.3. "Biological sciences"
Specialty "Virology"

**For the needs of Department of Virology of NCIPD
announced in State Newspaper No. 115/ 30.12.2025
with a single candidate**

ASSOC. PROF. IVAYLO ALEXIEV IVANOV, PhD, D.SCI.

Assoc. Prof. Ivaylo Aleksiev is an experienced and respected virologist and molecular biologist with over 25 years of experience in HIV diagnostics, molecular epidemiology and antiretroviral drug resistance, a national expert in whole-genome sequencing of viruses. Erudite, hardworking, responsible, he works tirelessly to raise the authority of the National Reference Confirmatory HIV Laboratory and the Virology Department at the National Center of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Assoc. Prof. Aleksiev graduated as a Master of Biology at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in 1994. Since 2003 and currently works at the National Center of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases. In 2008, he acquired a specialty in "Virology".

In 2011, he successfully defended his dissertation for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" with his work on the molecular-virological characterization of HIV-1 in Bulgaria.

In 2014, he was elected Associate Professor of Virology. Since 2016, he has headed the National Reference Confirmatory HIV Laboratory at the Virology

Department of the National Center of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases, and since 2024, he has been appointed Head of the Virology Department of the National Center of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases.

In 2025, he obtained scientific degree "Doctor of Science" after brilliantly defending a voluminous dissertation on the topic "Antiretroviral resistance and molecular epidemiology of HIV-1 in Bulgaria: integrated analysis of genetic diversity, phylodynamics and demographic correlations".

Assoc. Prof. Alexiev has numerous specializations and courses in the most prestigious laboratories in the USA and Europe. In 2018, with a Fulbright scholarship, he was a guest researcher for 6 months for teaching and conducting scientific research at the University of Florida, USA. International courses in bioinformatics, sequencing and analysis of resistance mutations are the foundation on which he successfully builds his own experience in studies on the genetic diversity of HIV in Bulgaria.

He is a member of prestigious national and international scientific societies - European Association for Translational Antiviral Research, Union of Scientists in Bulgaria, Bulgarian Society of Virology. He was a part of the Expert Council on Virology at the Ministry of Health.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTION

Assoc. Prof. Aleksiev participated in the current competition with a total of 57 publications, which do not repeat those submitted for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" and for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor".

The works include:

- Publications in international scientific journals with an impact factor - 41.
- Publications in international journals without an impact factor - 16.

Assoc. Prof. Aleksiev has 39 participations in European and world scientific forums and 162 participations in national scientific forums after occupying the academic position "Associate Professor".

The scientific works of Assoc. Prof. Aleksiev have been published in prestigious journals such as Eurosurveillance, PloS One, Biomedicines, Journal of Antimicrobial Chemotherapy, Clinical Infectious Diseases, AIDS Research and

Human Retroviruses, Pathogens and Global Health, BMC Infectious Diseases, Journal of Medical Virology, Frontiers in Microbiology and many others. The total impact factor of his publications is 172,928.

The significance of the achieved results is evidenced by the numerous citations of his works - a total of 485 citations have been received by Assoc. Prof. Aleksiev's articles (citations of publications used in the acquisition of the degrees "Doctor" and "Doctor of Science" as well as to achieve Associate Professor position are not included). His h-index is 18.

Assoc. Prof. Aleksiev participates in numerous scientific research projects, most of which are funded by the Scientific Research Fund of the Ministry of Education and Science. He personally led 3 projects funded by the Ministry of Education and Science, participated in 4 projects funded by the Ministry of Education and Science and in one funded by the Medical University of Sofia, as well as in a project and a program funded by the European Commission.

Taken together, all these facts show that Assoc. Prof. Aleksiev is a scientist with excellent theoretical and practical training and an international reputation.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Assoc. Prof. Alexiev has extensive research in several main areas, in which he has achieved significant scientific-theoretical and scientific-applied contributions.

- *Molecular epidemiology and antiretroviral resistance of HIV-1*: systematic analyses of the genetic diversity of the virus, evolutionary dynamics of different subtypes, phylogeographic reconstructions, study of transmission clusters and networks, as well as molecular characterization of antiretroviral drug resistance

- *Coinfections in people living with HIV*: molecular characterization of HCV transmission in key vulnerable populations, as well as analysis of access to diagnostics, treatment and care of viral hepatitis in Central and Eastern European countries

- *Genomic epidemiology of SARS-CoV-2 and other respiratory viruses*: systematic sequencing and phylogenetic analysis of circulating viral variants in Bulgaria. Introduction, spread and replacement of Alpha, Delta and Omicron variants, as well as recombinant forms, have been documented

- *Molecular diagnostics of viral infections and other pathogens*: molecular and serological diagnostics of other respiratory viruses, including respiratory syncytial virus, endemic coronaviruses and influenza viruses, as well as additional studies in the field of parasitology.

The comprehensive analysis of the research activity shows an active creative approach of an established researcher in the field of molecular biology.

TEACHING ACTIVITY

Assoc. Prof. Aleksiev actively participates in the teaching and learning activities of the Virology Department of the National Center of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases as a lecturer in postgraduate courses, as well as a supervisor and consultant to postgraduates, graduates and doctoral students. The submitted report shows a total of 887 hours of teaching workload for the last five years (average workload per year 177.4 hours).

After obtaining the academic position of "Associate Professor", he supervised the training of two graduates in the Master's program of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and was the scientific supervisor of two successfully defended doctoral students, who acquired the degree "Doctor" and remained to work in the National Reference and Confirmatory Laboratory for HIV.

CONCLUSION

Associate Professor Ivaylo Aleksiev Ivanov, Doctor of Science, is a distinguished professional, an expert in modern molecular methods, whole-genome sequencing and bioinformatics analysis, highly valued by his colleagues in Bulgaria and abroad, an excellently prepared and productive scientist with a flair for the new and promising and with a pronounced practical focus, who has proven his erudition and preparedness over the years.

Summarizing the importance of the scientific achievements and contributions of Assoc. Prof. Aleksiev, as well as his teaching experience with students, postgraduates and doctoral students, I can confidently state that they fully satisfy and exceed the quantitative and qualitative criteria of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation

and the criteria of the National Center of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases for the academic position of "Professor".

Based on all this, I strongly recommend that the esteemed members of the scientific jury support the candidacy and propose to the Scientific Council of the National Center for Infectious and Parasitic Diseases that **Associate Professor, Doctor of Sciences, Ivaylo Aleksiev Ivanov** be elected to the academic position of "**PROFESSOR**" in the specialty "Virology" for the needs of the Virology Department of the National Center for Infectious and Parasitic Diseases.

Signature:

/ Prof. Iva Christova, MD, PhD, DSc/