

TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SCIENTIFIC JURY

OPINION

By Professor Alexey Slavkov Savov PhD.

National Genetic Laboratory SBALAG Maichin Dom

REGARDING: competition announced in the State Gazette, issue 115/30.12.2025 for the academic position of "Professor" in the field of higher education: 4. "Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics", direction 4.3. "Biological Sciences" in the scientific specialty "Virusology" for the needs of the Department of "Virusology" of the National Center for Biological Sciences.

General part

By order No. 80 of 16.03.2026 of the Director of the National Center for Biological Sciences, I have been elected as a member of the scientific jury. In the competition thus announced, within the legal deadline, Ivaylo Aleksiev Ivanov, PhD. Associate Professor at the Department of "Virusology" of the National Center for Biological Sciences, submitted regular documents and was admitted. The materials for the competition have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its Implementation.

I declare that I have no conflict of interest in connection with the competition.

Brief biographical data

Associate Professor Ivaylo Aleksiev Ivanov graduated from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in 1994. From 2003 to the present, he has been working at the National Reference HIV Confirmation Laboratory at the National Center for Virology. In 2014, he was elected associate professor, and in 2024, head of the Virology Department at the National Center for Virology. In 2025, he acquired the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor of Sciences". The candidate has several specializations related to his professional field abroad, including the prestigious Fulbright scholarship as a visiting researcher at the University of Florida, USA.

Scientific works

Overview of scientific works

The publication activity of Associate Professor Ivaylo Aleksiev in connection with this competition includes: 26 articles with IF with a total of 572 quartile points (Q) by indicator B (3 and 4) and 30 articles with a total of 418 quartile points (Q) by indicator D., which significantly exceeds the minimum national requirements.

The total number of citations of scientific works without the publications used in the acquisition of the ONS "PhD", Associate Professor and Doctor of Science is 485 assessed with 970 points, which also significantly exceeds the requirements set out in the "Regulations for the implementation of the law on the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria"

Summary assessment of scientific works.

The scientific research activity of Associate Professor Aleksiev is presented with a holistic view of modern virology and molecular epidemiology, of studies of HIV infection in Bulgaria. For Bulgaria, the evidence of different subtype dynamics and resistance patterns is a compelling argument for robust genotyping, cluster-based interventions, and routine resistance surveillance embedded in national prevention strategies. Other areas of significant contribution are the genomic epidemiology of SARS-CoV-2 and other respiratory viruses; as well as approaches for molecular diagnostics of viral infections and other pathogens. As a main topic in relation to the scientific and theoretical contributions of the candidate, I accept the genetic epidemiological and evolutionary perspectives on the spread and adaptation of HIV among the population of Bulgaria. This includes defining the distribution of subtypes, transmission networks, and the development of resistance, proposing a comprehensive model of the HIV epidemic in the country. The studies reveal different behavior of HIV-1 subtypes A1, A6, and A7, including their temporal changes, transmission patterns, and genetic diversity. These findings deepen theoretical knowledge about how viral subtypes evolve and circulate in localized epidemics.

Conceptualization of the evolution of resistance — by mapping drug resistance mutations (SDRM) and their clustering, the study contributes to theoretical models of how resistance arises and spreads between different transmission groups. The scientific and practical contributions are related to the systematic registration of HIV infection and routine resistance monitoring. Convincing evidence is presented that Bulgaria should maintain long-term genotyping programs and integrate resistance monitoring into national HIV prevention strategies. This directly informs public health policy and clinical practice.

Scientific and teaching activities

Associate Professor Ivaylo Aleksiev is the scientific supervisor of two successfully defended PhD students. He has participated in five national scientific projects mainly as a supervisor and two international ones.

Conclusion

Associate Professor Ivaylo Aleksiev Ivanov is a recognized expert at national and international levels in the field of virology and molecular diagnostics. His impressive scientific career is distinguished by the wide spectrum of interests, innovative methodological approaches and rich scientific output. He has a strong sense of generating and successfully implementing scientific ideas, as well as an authoritative approach to training young professionals.

Considering all this, I take the liberty of convincingly recommending to the esteemed Scientific Jury that he be awarded the academic position of "Professor" in the field of higher education 4. "Natural Sciences Mathematics and Informatics"; professional field 4.3. "Biological Sciences" in the scientific specialty "Virusology"

26.04.2026

The Opinion was prepared by:

Professor Alexey S. Savov "PhD".

