

**TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SCIENTIFIC JURY,
APPOINTED BY ORDER
No. 15-03-141#2/12.06.2026
OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND THE PROCURATOR OF
“ACIBADEM CITY CLINIC UMHAT TOKUDA” JSC**

R E V I E W

**by Prof. Zhelyazko Iliev Arabadzhiev, MD, PhD
Clinic of Medical Oncology,
“Acibadem City Clinic UMHAT Tokuda” JSC, Sofia**

Appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury by the above Order and designated, at the first non-attendance session of the Scientific Jury, as its Chairman and as an internal reviewer of the procedure.

Re: Competition for the academic position of “ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR” in higher-education field 7. “Healthcare and Sport”, professional area 7.1. “Medicine”, scientific specialty “Oncology”, for the needs of the Clinic of Medical Oncology of “Acibadem City Clinic UMHAT Tokuda” JSC, Sofia, announced in State Gazette No. 35/14.04.2026 and in accordance with the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB), its Implementing Regulations, and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the medical establishment, with a single candidate for the position – **Dr. TANYA LYUBOMIROVA ZLATANOVA, MD, PhD.**

A review of the materials submitted for the competition shows that all statutory requirements and provisions have been observed. The candidate’s documents are comprehensive and fully compliant with the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, its Implementing Regulations, and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of “Acibadem City Clinic UMHAT Tokuda” JSC.

Dear Members of the Scientific Jury,

Dr. Tanya Lyubomirova Zlatanova completed her higher medical education at the Medical University of Sofia, obtaining the master’s degree of physician in 2001. She holds a specialty in “Internal Medicine” (2008) and a specialty in “Medical Oncology” (2017), as well as a professional qualification in “Healthcare Management” (2005). In 2024 she defended a doctoral dissertation and obtained the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” (PhD). Since 27.03.2025 she has held the academic position of “Chief Assistant Professor” at the Clinic of Medical Oncology of “Acibadem City Clinic UMHAT Tokuda” JSC.

Dr. Zlatanova’s professional career began as a resident in internal medicine at the Military Medical Academy in Sofia, continued at MHAT “Ihtiman” and at “Tokuda Hospice”, and since March 2012 to the present – at “Acibadem City Clinic UMHAT Tokuda” JSC, successively in the Clinic of Haematology and Oncology and in the Clinic of Medical Oncology. Her professional experience in clinical medicine exceeds 23 years, of which more than 14 years in the field of medical oncology.

Dr. Zlatanova continuously enhances her qualifications through participation in a number of prestigious international fellowships, courses and masterclasses, including: the CECOG Targeted

Drug Fellowship at the AKH, Medical University of Vienna, Austria (2016); the ESMO Preceptorship on Immuno-Oncology (Siena, Italy) and the ESMO Preceptorship on Immunotherapy of Cancer (Lausanne, Switzerland); the ESO-ESMO Masterclasses in Medical Oncology for Eastern Europe and the Balkan region; ESMO Advanced Courses on Early-Stage Non-Small-Cell Lung Cancer (Athens, 2026), on Antibody-Drug Conjugates (Zurich, 2024) and on KRAS targeting in NSCLC; as well as a completed 1.5-year Certificate of Advanced Studies in Thoracic Malignancies at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, in collaboration with the European School of Oncology (2026). The candidate has been an ESCO Fellow of the European School of Oncology for five consecutive years (2022–2026) and a participant in the ESCO mentorship programme.

Dr. Zlatanova is a member of the Management Board of the Bulgarian Scientific Society of Immuno-Oncology (BSSIO), as well as of prestigious international professional organisations – ESMO, ASCO, IASLC and ESCO. She is fluent in English (Certificate of Advanced English, University of Cambridge), as well as in German and Russian. Since October 2019 she has been a part-time lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Department of Propaedeutics of Internal Diseases.

Dr. Zlatanova’s scientific interests are focused on the drug treatment of thoracic tumours (primarily non-small-cell and small-cell lung cancer), immuno-oncology, breast cancer, gynaecological tumours and gastrointestinal tumours, as well as on the prognostic role of systemic inflammation markers in oncology. The candidate is a principal investigator in two phase III clinical trials (SORAYA and AXIS) and a principal investigator and sub-investigator in more than 10 international research projects for the testing of new medicinal products in lung and breast cancer, strictly observing the rules of Good Clinical Practice. She is a participant in the INTERACT EUROPE 100 project of the European Cancer Organisation, funded by the European Commission, which brings together 100 of the best oncology centres in Europe for training in the field of oncology.

In the present competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor” the candidate participates with **a total of 36 scientific works**, as follows: 1 doctoral dissertation for the PhD degree; 1 monograph; 2 teaching aids for oncologists and residents; and 32 scientific publications in scientific journals. Of the publications, **9 are in journals referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases (Scopus / Web of Science)**, of which **7 carry an impact factor** (4 in international and 3 in Bulgarian journals), while the remainder are in peer-reviewed journals included in the National Reference List of NACID. In total, 8 of the works are in English and 29 in Bulgarian. The publications with an impact factor appear in prestigious journals such as *Cancers*, *Frontiers in Oncology*, *Journal of Thoracic Oncology*, *Medical Review*, *Neurosonology and Cerebral Hemodynamics* and *Pharmacia*. **The total impact factor, calculated on the basis of an official reference from the Central Medical Library of the Medical University of Sofia, amounts to 35.4.**

By position within the authorship teams, Dr. Zlatanova is **sole or first author in 21 (58.3%) of the publications**, second author in 9 (25%) and third or subsequent author in 6 (16.7%). Her scientific activity further includes 30 reports and communications presented at scientific forums – 8 at international and 22 at national events – in 27 of which she is first author and presenter.

According to the citation reference No. 407/24.04.2026 issued by the Central Medical Library of the Medical University of Sofia, **a total of 39 citations** are documented, of which, in foreign

sources, 5 in Scopus and 6 in Web of Science, and 28 in Bulgarian sources. **The Hirsch index (h-index) is 2 in Scopus and 2 in Web of Science.**

The scientific works presented are topical, of substantial scientific interest and practical value, and closely linked to clinical diagnostic and therapeutic activity. In them, Dr. Zlatanova demonstrates in-depth scientific and practical knowledge and an ability to synthesise and generalise. Her research and applied activity may be summarised in the following main directions:

1. Systemic inflammation markers and thromboembolism risk in oncological diseases. – This is the leading direction, within which the candidate's doctoral dissertation was also developed. For the first time in Bulgaria, the prognostic and predictive role of the inflammatory indices SII, Khorana score (KS), modified KS and ALI was investigated with respect to progression-free survival, overall survival and tumour response in patients with metastatic non-small-cell lung cancer treated with first-line monoimmunotherapy or combined chemoimmunotherapy, together with their association with the risk of venous thromboembolism. It was demonstrated that high values of these indices are associated with a poorer prognosis and an increased risk of early mortality. For the first time in the Bulgarian medical literature, a comprehensive, systematised review of both the "classical" and the contemporary inflammatory biomarkers in oncology was presented. The contributions are of a scientific-theoretical and scientific-applied nature and justify the use of accessible and inexpensive biomarkers for risk stratification and personalisation of therapy.

2. Diagnosis and treatment of lung cancer. – The contemporary scientific knowledge on the structure, mechanism of action and clinical application of antibody-drug conjugates (ADCs) in non-small-cell and small-cell lung cancer has been systematised, including the principal molecular targets (HER2, HER3, TROP-2, DLL3, B7-H3, MET, CEACAM5, SEZ6) and the factors determining their efficacy and toxicity. The first national real-world data from Bulgaria on the use of atezolizumab in combination with carboplatin and etoposide in extensive-stage small-cell lung cancer are presented, confirming the reproducibility of the registration-trial results in real clinical practice. The candidate is also a co-author of an international analysis of access to innovative therapies for NSCLC across 18 EU Member States. Treatment algorithms for patients with targetable driver mutations are proposed.

3. Immuno-oncology. – The results of pivotal clinical trials (KEYNOTE-024/189/407, IMpower130/132/150, CheckMate 227 and 9LA) have been integrated, the role of predictive biomarkers (PD-L1, TMB) and of the tumour microenvironment has been summarised, and a concept for individualisation of systemic therapy in NSCLC has been derived. A systematised review and critical analysis of the contemporary recommendations for the diagnosis, staging and treatment of small-cell lung cancer has been carried out. Practical algorithms for the choice of first- and subsequent-line therapy, applicable in everyday clinical practice, have been proposed.

4. Diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer. – The contemporary knowledge of the molecular classification of breast cancer and the mechanisms of endocrine resistance (ESR1 mutations, PI3K/AKT/mTOR and CDK4/6 signalling pathways) has been systematised. The results of leading trials of CDK4/6 inhibitors (PALOMA-2/3, MONARCH, MONALEESA-3) have been summarised and a contemporary therapeutic algorithm has been proposed. Triple-negative breast cancer has been analysed in depth, including the role of immunotherapy (IMpassion130, KEYNOTE-355) and of PARP inhibitors in BRCA1/2 mutations (OlympiAD, EMBRACA).

5. Gynaecological tumours, gastrointestinal tumours and prostate cancer. – The candidate is a co-author of two national, evidence-based clinical guidelines developed under the GRADE methodology – for the management of cholangiocarcinoma (2024) and of cervical cancer (2025), produced within the Expert Board of the MORE National Oncology Conference. A comprehensive, evidence-based framework for the diagnosis, staging, treatment and follow-up of cervical cancer has been developed, together with a structured multidisciplinary model for clinical decision-making. The contemporary knowledge on the diagnosis and treatment of prostate cancer – from hormone-sensitive to castration-resistant stage – has also been systematised.

6. Clinical cases from real-world practice. – Clinically and scientifically interesting cases have been presented and published, among them a rare case of metastatic hyperprogression following consolidation immunotherapy with durvalumab, and cases of concomitant idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis and lung cancer, which support the differential-diagnostic process and expand knowledge of rare clinical conditions.

The contributions in the above directions are of scientific-theoretical, scientific-applied and confirmatory significance and find direct application in clinical oncology practice, as well as educational value as a contemporary scientific source for students, residents and specialists.

The teaching activity of Dr. Tanya Zlatanova is associated with the training of medical students. Since 2020 she has been a part-time lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, where she conducts seminars in propaedeutics of internal diseases for third-year students, with a teaching load of the order of 210–225 hours per year. At “Acibadem City Clinic UMHAT Tokuda” JSC she participates in the training of residents in medical oncology, having delivered 855.5 equivalent hours with residents over the period 01.01.2021 – 01.05.2026. She is the supervisor of the residency of one resident in medical oncology. Her total teaching load for the period 2020–2025 is calculated at **1,950.5 equivalent hours**.

In addition, Dr. Zlatanova pursues active **expert and organisational activity**: she is a member of an Expert Group for programme accreditation with the NAOA (2026); chair of health technology assessment committees with the NCPRMP; deputy chair and secretary of the organising and scientific committees of the national immuno-oncology conferences and congresses (IO 365); co-organiser of the annual multidisciplinary scientific meeting “Comprehensive Management in the Contemporary Treatment of Thoracic Tumours”; and a member of the Management Board of the BSSIO.

The submitted Reference for compliance with the minimum national requirements for the academic position of “Associate Professor” in higher-education field 7. “Healthcare and Sport”, professional area 7.1. “Medicine” shows that the candidate meets and significantly exceeds the minimum national requirements:

- **Group A** (defended doctoral dissertation for the PhD degree) – **50 points against 50 required.**
- **Group C** (monograph or equivalent publications) – **100 points against 100 required.**
- **Group D** (sum of indicators 5 to 9 – publications) – **458.34 points against 200 required.**
- **Group E** (sum of indicators 10 to 12 – citations) – **230 points against 50 required.**
- **Total – 838.34 points against 400 required.**

The candidate’s scientometric indicators fully satisfy the requirements for the academic position of “Associate Professor”. With a view to her future academic development, I recommend

expanding her publication activity in international journals with an impact factor and in first-author positions, which would contribute to increasing her citation index and international scientific visibility. This recommendation is entirely encouraging in nature and in no way diminishes the high assessment of the works presented.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the above, I give my positive assessment of the scientific, applied-scientific, teaching and clinical activity of Dr. Tanya Lyubomirova Zlatanova, MD, PhD. She is an accomplished specialist in internal medicine and medical oncology, a dedicated clinician and researcher with clearly defined scientific interests, substantial contributions in the fields of thoracic oncology, immuno-oncology and prognostic biomarkers, and recognised standing within the Bulgarian oncology community.

I am firmly convinced that Dr. Tanya Lyubomirova Zlatanova fully meets and exceeds all the necessary requirements and criteria, including the quantitative scientometric indicators laid down in the ADASRB, its Implementing Regulations and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of “Acibadem City Clinic UMHAT Tokuda” JSC for the academic position of “Associate Professor”. I assess positively the materials submitted to me for review and propose that the esteemed members of the Scientific Jury vote in favour of awarding the academic position of “ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR” to Dr. Tanya Lyubomirova Zlatanova, MD, PhD, in the scientific specialty “Oncology”.

Sofia

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Respectfully,

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/ Prof. Zhelyazko Iliev Arabadzhiev, MD, PhD /