

OPINION

Prepared by Prof. Christo Tzekov Tzekov, MD, PhD, Neurosurgeon, Department of Neurosurgery, Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda Hospital EAD, Sofia

Regarding: the procedure for the competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional field 7.1. Medicine and scientific specialty “Neonatology” for the needs of the Department of Neonatology at Acibadem City Clinic UMHAT Tokuda EAD, announced in State Gazette issue No. 18/17.02.2026.

Candidate: Dr. Radka Tsokova Maslarska, MD, PhD, Head of the Department of Neonatology at Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda Hospital EAD, Sofia

All requirements under the Academic Staff Development Act of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for Academic Staff Development at Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda Hospital EAD have been fully observed in the announcement of the competition. The jury was appointed by Protocol No. 64 of 18.03.2026 of the Scientific Council of Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda Hospital EAD, Sofia. The candidate holds recognized specialties in Neonatology and Pediatrics.

Dr. Radka Maslarska graduated with a Master’s degree in Medicine in Pleven in 1986. She initially worked in the neonatology departments of the hospitals in Lovech (1987–1992) and Pleven (1992–1995). During the period 1995–2005, she worked at the University Specialized Hospital for Active Treatment of Children “Prof. Ivan Mitev,” and during the following two years, after a competitive selection procedure, she was appointed Head of the Neonatology Department at the Second City Hospital in Sofia. Since 2006 to the present day, she has served as Head of the Department of Neonatology at Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda Hospital EAD, Sofia. Under her leadership, the department has developed into a highly coordinated team providing care, resuscitation, and treatment for newborns not only within this hospital but throughout the country. Particularly noteworthy is the collaboration with the Department of Neurosurgery, especially its Pediatric Division, which enables neurosurgical treatment and high-quality postoperative care for children with neurosurgical conditions from the very first hours after birth. Similar collaboration exists with the Departments of Surgery and Thoracic Surgery regarding newborns with malformations of the digestive and respiratory systems.

The department utilizes and maintains highly advanced technological equipment. Dr. Maslarska herself has conducted teaching activities and performs highly specialized procedures, including ultrasound examinations of respiration and the lungs, abdominal ultrasonography, and transfontanelle ultrasonography. She participates annually in numerous clinical studies. She is a member of the Associations of Pediatrics, Neonatology, Maternal-Fetal Medicine, Premature Infants, and Children with Hemangiomas. She also serves as an expert to the Ministry of Health in the fields of vaccination prophylaxis and neonatal air transport. In addition, she is a member of the Editorial Board of the journal *Medical Magazine*.

In 2023, she defended a dissertation for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor.” The dissertation was entitled “*Hemangiomas in Infancy and Early Childhood – Innovative Treatment and Follow-Up*.” Hemangiomas on the body surface represent a serious social problem, especially common among premature infants and in early infancy, often associated with other physical anomalies. This necessitates the search for alternative methods of treatment to surgery, and Dr. Maslarska has successfully introduced such treatment approaches.

In the current competition, Dr. Maslarska presents, in addition to her dissertation, 33 scientific publications and 49 scientific reports unrelated to the dissertation work. Of the scientific contributions, 67 have been presented at national scientific forums and 16 at forums with international participation. Twelve of the scientific publications have been published in peer-reviewed and indexed scientific journals in Bulgaria, and four in international journals. She has presented 37 reports with published full texts and one abstract at national congresses and

conferences, as well as 12 presentations at international congresses. The total number of citations is eight, all of them in foreign scientific journals. The overall impact factor of the journals publishing Dr. R. Maslarska's scientific articles is Impact Factor (Web of Science) 10.62 and Journal Rank SJR (Scopus) 5.192, calculated on the basis of the official reference reports from NACID and the Central Medical Library of the Medical University of Sofia.

The scientific interests reflected in the listed publications and presentations represent the entirety of her lifelong professional dedication to her young patients. These interests are concentrated in the field of intensive care, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation in high-risk newborns, prevention and assessment of long-term consequences in the context of therapeutic management of newborns weighing less than 1,000 grams, and collaboration with related specialists in solving these problems. Her studies on invasive and non-invasive pulmonary ventilation, ensuring effective venous access, and parenteral nutrition are particularly noteworthy. This also includes preoperative preparation and postoperative follow-up during the early postoperative period in children with neurosurgical, respiratory, and digestive disorders.

Dr. Maslarska's attention is also focused on the prevention of various neonatal diseases and complications, as well as the early diagnosis and referral of children with retinopathy, deafness, and blindness. Since 2010, treatment of infantile hemangiomas with beta-blockers (Propranolol) has also been introduced. Of exceptional interest is the study of pain in the fetus and newborn, for which easy-to-use scales have been introduced, based on gestational age and the child's behavioral and physiological changes. Her contribution to the introduction of standards and modern technologies in intensive therapy is invaluable. The publications also include numerous case reports, and the analysis of these cases is of immense practical importance.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that Dr. Radka Maslarska is an established specialist in Pediatrics and Neonatology. For many years, she has headed the Department for Premature and Newborn Infants, and the team under her leadership is exceptionally well organized, highly professionally trained, and equipped with modern diagnostic and therapeutic technology. Dr. Maslarska has made a significant contribution to this high level of development. The quality of work in the department is clearly demonstrated by the large number of medical residents specializing there. In addition to her administrative and organizational qualities, Dr. Maslarska has also proven herself as an effective scientific researcher with impressive scientific output that fully satisfies the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act of the Republic of Bulgaria.

I am pleased to support the candidacy of Dr. Maslarska and vote "In Favor" of her appointment as Associate Professor at the Department of Neonatology, Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda Hospital EAD, Sofia.

13.05.2026
Sofia

Prepared by:

