

OPINION

**FROM PROF. MILENA STANEVA STANEVA, MD, PhD
HEAD OF ANGIOLOGY CLINIC
ACIBADEM CITY CLINIC TOKUDA UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL EAD, SOFIA**

REGARDING: PROCEDURE FOR ACADEMIC POSITION OF “ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR” IN THE FIELD OF HIGHER EDUCATION 7. HEALTHCARE AND SPORTS, PROFESSIONAL FIELD 7.1 MEDICINE, SCIENTIFIC SPECIALTY “ONCOLOGY”, FOR THE NEEDS OF THE CLINIC OF MEDICAL ONCOLOGY AT ACIBADEM CITY CLINIC TOKUDA UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

1. Information about procedure

The competition for occupying the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the field of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports, professional field 7.1 Medicine, scientific specialty “Oncology”, for the needs of the Clinic of Medical Oncology at Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital, was announced in the State Gazette, issue No. 35 of 14.04.2026. By Order No. 15-03-141#2/12.06.2026 of the Executive Director and the Procurator of Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital, I was appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury, and the decision of the first absentee meeting was that I should submit an opinion.

Only one candidate submitted documents for participation in the competition: Dr. Tanya Lyubomirova Zlatanova, MD, PhD, who meets all the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, its Implementing Regulations, and the Regulations on the Terms and Procedure for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions at Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital.

After reviewing the submitted materials, I declare that I have found no evidence of plagiarism and that I have no conflict of interest.

2. Professional data of the candidate

Dr. Tanya Zlatanova graduated in Medicine from the Medical University of Sofia in 2001. She acquired a specialty in Internal Medicine in 2008 and in Medical Oncology in 2016. Dr. Zlatanova initially worked at MHAT Ihtiman, Internal Medicine Department (01.09.2004 – 01.09.2009), and subsequently at Tokuda Hospice (01.09.2009 – 19.03.2012). Since 19.03.2012, she has been a physician at the Clinic of Medical Oncology of Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital. Dr. Zlatanova’s total professional experience is 23 years, 11 months and 9 days, of which 14 years, 2 months and 2 days are in the specialty of Medical Oncology. Since 2019, she has been a part-time lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Sofia.

On 16.10.2024, Dr. Zlatanova was awarded the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” (PhD), following the successful defense of a dissertation entitled “Markers of Systemic Inflammation and the Effectiveness of Immunotherapy in Patients with Metastatic Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer”. Since 27.03.2025, after a competition at Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital, she has held the academic position of Chief Assistant Professor and actively participates in the training of students and residents.

Her professional qualification is continuously upgraded through participation in prestigious international educational programs of ESMO, ESO, CECOG and the European Cancer Organization. Particularly noteworthy are her participation as an ESCO Fellow, the INTERACT-EUROPE100 program, and numerous international specialized courses in the fields of thoracic oncology and immuno-oncology.

She is proficient in English.

3. Assessment of quantitative and qualitative indicators

The scientific output of Dr. Tanya Zlatanova, with which she participates in the competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor”, includes a total of 66 scientific works: 1 dissertation; 1 monograph; 34 publications (9 in refereed and indexed journals, of which 7 with an impact factor, and 25 in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals included in the National Reference List); and co-authorship in 2 collective clinical guidelines.

Her authorial contribution makes a particularly positive impression: in more than half of the publications the candidate is first or sole author (58.3%) or second author (25%), which is an indicator of a leading contribution to the scientific work.

The total impact factor is 35.4, with an h-index of 2 (Scopus and Web of Science).

Her scientific activity also includes 30 scientific presentations, 8 of which were delivered at international scientific forums and 22 at national forums, while in 27 of them she was first author and lecturer; participation in numerous national and international scientific forums; participation in the international project INTERACT-EUROPE100; and participation as principal investigator and sub-investigator in more than 10 international clinical trials.

According to the data from the Citation Report of the Central Medical Library, No. 409/24.04.2026, 36 citations were registered: 25 in Bulgarian sources, 5 in Scopus and 6 in Web of Science (the Scopus and Web of Science databases partially overlap). Three self-citations were identified.

The table presents the correspondence between the number of points submitted by Dr. T. Zlatanova and the minimum required points for acquiring the academic position of “Associate Professor” at Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital EAD.

Group of indicators	Content	Minimum points required by NACID for “Associate Professor”	Points submitted by Dr. T. Zlatanova, MD, PhD
A	Indicator 1	50	50
B	Indicator 2	-	-----
C	Indicators 3 or 4	100	100
D	Sum of indicators 5 to 9	200	458.34 pts
E	Sum of indicators 10 to 12	50	230 pts
Total number of points		400	838.34 pts

The submitted scientific indicators exceed the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position of “Associate Professor”, as the candidate presents 838.34 points against the required 400 points.

4. Major scientific contributions

Dr. Zlatanova’s scientific interests are focused on some of the most current issues in contemporary medical oncology, with the main areas including: inflammatory biomarkers, thromboembolism in oncological diseases and immuno-oncology (1, 2, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14, 21, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32); diagnosis and treatment of lung cancer (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 19, 20, 21, 24, 26, 27, 29, 31); antibody-drug conjugates (5); personalized medicine (12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19); real-world clinical cases (3, 7, 8, 9, 18, 30, 32); breast cancer (8, 12, 13, 16, 17, 22, 23); gastrointestinal (32, 33, 35) and gynecological tumors (25, 34, 36).

The candidate’s most significant contribution is related to the investigation of systemic inflammation as a prognostic and predictive factor in patients with metastatic non-small cell lung cancer. For the first time in Bulgaria, the role of the SII, Khorana Score, modified Khorana Score and ALI indices was analyzed with respect to therapeutic response, survival and the risk of thromboembolic complications. The obtained results

have both scientific value and direct practical application in everyday clinical practice. Particular attention is paid to the practical aspects and limitations of implementing inflammatory biomarkers in routine clinical practice.

The review publications on inflammatory biomarkers and antibody-drug conjugates also represent an important contribution, as they systematize the latest scientific evidence and may serve as a valuable educational resource for specialists and residents.

Dr. Zlatanova's scientific works are distinguished by their relevance, sound methodological basis, clearly expressed originality, and scientific and practical orientation.

5. Teaching activity

Dr. Zlatanova actively participates in the education of medical students in English in Propedeutics of Internal Medicine at the Faculty of Medicine of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", as well as in the training of residents in medical oncology.

She is a supervisor of specialty training, participates as a lecturer in numerous national and international scientific forums, and her lectures are dedicated to the most modern areas in oncology: immunotherapy, targeted therapy, antibody-drug conjugates and personalized medicine.

Certificate Ref. No. 19-284/05.05.2026, issued by Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital EAD, shows that for the period from 01.01.2021 to 01.05.2026, Dr. Tanya Lyubomirova Zlatanova carried out a teaching workload with residents (in equivalent hours) amounting to **855.50** equivalent hours. According to the provided report on the teaching workload of Dr. Tanya Lyubomirova Zlatanova, issued by Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of Medicine, Department of Internal Medicine, Pharmacology and Clinical Pharmacology, Pediatrics, Epidemiology, Infectious and Skin Diseases, a teaching workload for the period 2020–2025 of 1,095 classroom hours as a part-time lecturer of medical students in English was established.

Dr. Zlatanova's teaching workload for the period 2021–2025 is very well represented and amounts to a total of 1,950.5 teaching hours. Her teaching activity is diverse, up-to-date and fully complies with the requirements for the academic position of "Associate Professor".

6. Medical and diagnostic activity

Dr. Zlatanova carries out active clinical work as a medical oncologist in one of the leading oncology clinics in the country. Her work includes diagnosis, systemic treatment and follow-up of patients with solid tumors, participation in multidisciplinary oncology boards and international clinical trials. Alongside her clinical work, she actively implements modern scientific achievements in daily medical practice.

7. Expert activity

Dr. Zlatanova has been a member of the Expert Group for program accreditation of the doctoral programs "Imaging Diagnostics" and "Plastic Surgery" at the Military Medical Academy to the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency since April 2026. As an established expert in antitumor treatment, she has been appointed chair of several health technology assessment committees at the National Council on Prices and Reimbursement of Medicinal Products.

Dr. T. Zlatanova was a member of the Scientific Committee and Deputy Chair of the Organizing Committee of the Scientific Conference on Immuno-Oncology with International Participation, IO 365 v.2, 21–23.10.2022, Sofia; she was Secretary of the Scientific Committee and Deputy Chair of the Organizing Committee of the National Congress on Immuno-Oncology with International Participation, 20–23 November 2025. Dr. Zlatanova is a member of the Management Board of the Bulgarian Scientific Society of Immuno-Oncology.

For two consecutive years (2024 and 2025), Dr. T. Zlatanova participated in the Expert Board of the 15th and 16th National Oncology Conference MORE (Clinical Management of Cholangiocarcinoma: Evidence-Based Clinical Guideline – 2024; Clinical Management of Cervical Cancer: Evidence-Based Clinical Guideline – 2025) (Nos. 35, 36). In 2026, after successfully passing the examination, she completed the Certificate of Advanced Studies in Thoracic Malignancies at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, in collaboration with the European School of Oncology, and she is currently the only certified thoracic oncologist in Bulgaria.

Conclusion

The submitted documents and the overall scientific, teaching and clinical activity of Dr. Tanya Lyubomirova Zlatanova demonstrate a candidate with high professional qualification, substantial scientific contribution and significant academic potential.

The candidate meets and exceeds the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position of “Associate Professor”, presenting scientific output with clearly expressed original and applied contributions, active international activity and consistent development as a teacher and clinician.

On the basis of the above, I give my positive assessment and confidently recommend that the esteemed Scientific Jury vote in favor of the election of Dr. Tanya Lyubomirova Zlatanova, MD, PhD, to the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the scientific specialty “Oncology” for the needs of the Clinic of Medical Oncology at Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital.

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Sofia

Prepared by:
/Prof. Milena Staneva, MD, PhD/

