

OPINION

FROM PROF. DR. MARIA HRISTOVA MILANOVA, DMSc

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Subject: Competition for the academic position of "Professor" in the scientific specialty Cardiology, for the needs of the Cardiology Clinic at Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital, Sofia.

Pursuant to Protocol No. 58/05.06.2025 and Order No. 15-05-141 of 11.06.2025 issued by the Executive Director and the Procurator of "Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital", I was appointed as an external member of the Scientific Jury in the procedure for the appointment to the academic position of "Professor" in Higher Education Area 7. Healthcare and Sports, Professional Field 7.1. Medicine, Scientific Specialty "Cardiology." The competition was announced in State Gazette No. 31 of 11.04.2025.

At the first meeting of the Scientific Jury, I was designated to prepare an expert opinion.

There is one candidate in the competition – Dr. Valeri Lyubenov Gelev, PhD.

All necessary documents required under Art. 4, para. 2 and Art. 29a of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), as well as Art. 2, paras. 2 and 3, and Art. 62, paras. 1 and 2 of its Implementing Regulations, and in accordance with the information from the reports under Art. 67 of the Internal Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff at "Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital" – Sofia, were provided to me in electronic format. They fully comply with the provisions of the LDASRB and its Implementing Rules.

For the purposes of this procedure, Assoc. Prof. Gelev has submitted a list of publications, records of participation in scientific forums, a report on teaching and scientific activities, a statement of scientific contributions, all required diplomas and certificates, and other relevant documents. No evidence of plagiarism has been found.

I declare no conflict of interest.

I. BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Assoc. Prof. Valeri Gelev graduated in Medicine from the Medical University – Sofia in 1990. He holds specialties in Internal Medicine (1995) and Cardiology (2000), as well as a High Specialization Diploma in Invasive Cardiology (2003). In 2016, he completed a Master's degree in Healthcare Management at the Faculty of Public Health, Medical University – Sofia.

Assoc. Prof. Valeri Gelev began his medical career in 1990, initially working as a general practitioner in the town of Kostenets, then as a cardiologist at University Emergency Hospital “N.I. Pirogov” and later in the Department of Invasive Cardiology at the “National Heart Hospital “ in Sofia. From 2009 to 2013, he was Head of the Department of Invasive Cardiology at “N.I. Pirogov.” Since 2013, he has served as Deputy Head, and as of 01.03.2023 – Head of the Cardiology Clinic at “Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital” in Sofia. Since the 2019/2020 academic year, Assoc. Prof. Gelev has also been a part-time lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski.”

In 2021, he defended his doctoral dissertation entitled “Retrograde Approach in the Recanalization of Chronic Coronary Occlusions” and was awarded the academic and scientific degree “PhD”.

Since 2021, he has held the position of Associate Professor in Cardiology at the Cardiology Clinic of “Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital”.

Assoc. Prof. Gelev has completed multiple training programs in interventional cardiology at ICPS – Mass, Paris, France (2004), Columbia University, New York, USA (2006 and 2008) and Institute of Cardio-Vascular Medicine, Novosibirsk, Russia (2008 and 2009).

Assoc. Prof. Valeri Gelev is a member of the Expert Council on Cardiology at the Ministry of Health, the Bulgarian Society of Cardiology (BSC), the European Society of Cardiology (ESC), the Bulgarian Society of Invasive Cardiology, and the Bulgarian Medical Association. Since 2010, he has also been a member of the European CTO Club. He served two terms (2015–2019) as Chair and since 2023 as Vice-Chair of the Bulgarian Society of Invasive Cardiology. From 2020 to 2024, he was a member of the Governing Board of the Bulgarian Society of Cardiology. Since 2013 he has been one of the Directors of the Bulgarian Bifurcation Course (BBC).

II. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CANDIDATE’S SCIENTIFIC WORK

Assoc. Prof. Valeri Gelev is the author and co-author of 131 scientific works, 130 of which were completed after his appointment as “Associate Professor”. These include : one dissertation for the acquisition of the PhD degree, one chapter in a peer-reviewed book, 50 scientific articles (29 indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, of which 21 have an

Impact Factor, and 21 are in journals recognized by the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency), and 79 participations in scientific forums (28 international and 51 national), in the capacity of organizer, moderator, and/or lecturer. In 28 of these works, the candidate is listed as first or last author.

According to the submitted report for compliance with the minimum scientometric criteria, Assoc. Prof. Valeri Gelev meets the requirements in scientific and teaching activity for holding an academic position, as set by the Scientific Council of "Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital" EAD.

III. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CANDIDATE'S SCIENTIFIC WORK AND CITATIONS

The candidate demonstrates significant scientific and practical contributions of proven professional quality, developed and published in reputable journals and presented at international forums. These contributions can be grouped into the following main thematic areas:

- **Recanalization of chronic coronary occlusions**
- **Percutaneous interventions for left main coronary stenosis**
- **Complex coronary interventions**
- **Non-obstructive coronary artery disease**
- **Lp(a) and its role as a cardiovascular risk factor**
- **Miscellaneous:** Heart rate variability and its changes in patients with chronic coronary syndrome before and after revascularization, and in patients with degenerative aortic stenosis; Endovascular treatment of visceral organs in life-threatening urological conditions; Diagnosis and treatment of heart failure with preserved ejection fraction; Current treatment of acute coronary syndrome, heart failure, arterial hypertension, dyslipidemia; Contrast-induced neurotoxicity following interventional treatment of cerebral aneurysms; Arrhythmias and COVID-19.

According to the official citation report from the Central Medical Library at the Medical University of Sofia, the candidate's works have been cited a total of 10,288 times, including 1,871 in Scopus, 8,413 in Web of Science, and 4 in Bulgarian sources. The total impact factor of the indexed publications is 616.438

The scientometric indicators of Dr. Valeri Gelev meet the minimum requirements set by the Internal Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff at "Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University" Hospital. The candidate holds a defended doctoral thesis. For indicators B through E, the candidate exceeds the minimum required points. He meets the requirements for number of citations. He is involved in teaching within the department, including the training of residents, continuing medical education, and high-specialized activities in "Cardiology". He also teaches medical students in Bulgarian and

English in the 4th and 6th years of the Internal Medicine – Cardiology course at the Faculty of Medicine of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

Indicator Group	Content	Minimum Required Points (NACID and “Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University” Hospital)	Points Presented by Assoc. Prof. V. Gelev, PhD
A	Indicator 1	50	50
B	Indicator 2	-	-
C	Indicators 3 or 4	100	132.53
D	Sum of indicators 5 to 9	200	238
E	Sum of indicators 10 to 12	100	168.920
F	Sum of indicators from 13 onward	100	260
Total		550	169,601.1 points

IV. CONCLUSION

After reviewing the documents and materials submitted in the competition, I find that they meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), its Implementing Regulations, and the Internal Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff at “Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital” – Sofia. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Valeri Gelev applies with a sufficient number of publications and presentations at international forums, earning scientometric points exceeding the minimum thresholds. His scientific output demonstrates original theoretical and applied knowledge.

For the reasons outlined above, I confidently give a **positive evaluation** and recommend that the esteemed members of the Scientific Jury vote in favor of the election of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Valeri Lyubenov Gelev, PhD, to the academic position of “**Professor**” in Higher Education Area 7. Healthcare and Sports, Professional Field 7.1. Medicine, Scientific Specialty Cardiology, for the needs of the Cardiology Clinic at “Acibadem City Clinic Tokuda University Hospital”, Sofia. The competition was announced in State Gazette No. 31 of 11.04.2025.

26.06.2025

PROF. DR. MARIA MILANOVA, DSc