

OPINION
BY PROF. PETRANKA TROYANOVA, MD, PHD
DEPARTMENT OF NUCLEAR MEDICINE, RADIOTHERAPY AND MEDICAL ONCOLOGY
FACULTY OF MEDICINE, MEDICAL UNIVERSITY – SOFIA
REGARDING
THE COMPETITION FOR 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 DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL ONCOLOGY,
ACIBADEM CITY CLINIC UNIVERSITY MULTIPROFILE HOSPITAL FOR ACTIVE
TREATMENT TOKUDA EAD, SOFIA,
ANNOUNCED IN THE STATE GAZETTE, ISSUE NO. 35 OF 14 APRIL 2026

I. Brief Information about the Competition

Within the statutory deadline, only one candidate submitted application documents for participation in the competition—Dr. Tanya Lyubomirova Zlatanova, MD, PhD. The documents and materials submitted by the candidate have been prepared carefully and systematically and fully comply with the requirements of the Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (ASDRBA), the Regulations for its Implementation, and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of Acibadem City Clinic University Hospital Tokuda EAD.

I hereby declare that I have no joint publications or scientific works with the candidate.

II. Analysis of the Candidate's Career Profile

Dr. Tanya Lyubomirova Zlatanova graduated in Medicine from the Medical University – Sofia in 2001. In 2008, she obtained the specialty in Internal Medicine, followed by the specialty in Medical Oncology in 2017. In 2005, she also acquired the professional qualification in Health Management.

She began her professional career as a resident physician in Internal Medicine at the Military Medical Academy – Sofia, subsequently worked at MBAL Ihtiman and Tokuda Hospice, and since March 2012 has been employed at Acibadem City Clinic University Hospital Tokuda EAD, where she has successively worked in the Department of Hematology and Oncology and the Department of Medical Oncology.

Her professional experience in clinical medicine exceeds 23 years, including more than 14 years in the field of Medical Oncology.

In 2024, she successfully defended her doctoral dissertation and was awarded the educational and scientific degree of Doctor (PhD). Since 27 March 2025, she has held the academic position of Chief Assistant Professor at the Department of Medical Oncology of Acibadem City Clinic University Hospital Tokuda EAD.

Since October 2019, she has also served as a part-time lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Department of Propaedeutics of Internal Diseases.

Dr. Zlatanova is proficient in English, German, and Russian, both spoken and written, and possesses excellent computer literacy.

She continuously enhances her professional qualifications through participation in numerous prestigious international fellowships, specialized training courses, and masterclasses.

Dr. Zlatanova is a member of numerous Bulgarian and international scientific and professional organizations. She serves as a member of the Executive Board of the Bulgarian Scientific Society of Immuno-Oncology (BSSIO) and is also a member of several prestigious international professional societies, including the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO), the American Society of

Clinical Oncology (ASCO), the International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC), and ESCO.

III. Research Activity – Description of the Materials Submitted for the Competition

For the present competition, Dr. Zlatanova has submitted a total of 36 scientific works, comprising: one doctoral dissertation entitled "Systemic Inflammatory Markers and the Efficacy of Immunotherapy in Patients with Metastatic Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer" submitted for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree of Doctor (PhD); one monograph; two educational manuals intended for medical oncologists and resident physicians; and 32 scientific publications published in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

Among these publications, nine are published in journals indexed in internationally recognized databases (Scopus and Web of Science), of which seven have an Impact Factor (four in international journals and three in Bulgarian journals). The remaining publications have appeared in peer-reviewed journals included in the National Reference List of the National Centre for Information and Documentation (NACID).

A total of eight of the submitted scientific works have been published in English, while twenty-nine are in Bulgarian.

The publications with an Impact Factor have appeared in prestigious journals such as *Cancers*, *Frontiers in Oncology*, *Journal of Thoracic Oncology*, *Medical Review*, *Neurosonology and Cerebral Hemodynamics*, and *Pharmacia*. According to the official certificate issued by the Central Medical Library of the Medical University – Sofia, the candidate's cumulative Impact Factor amounts to 35.4.

Dr. Zlatanova is the sole or first author of 21 publications (58.3%), the second author of 9 publications (25%), and the third or subsequent author of 6 publications (16.7%).

Her scientific activity further includes 30 oral presentations and conference communications, delivered at 8 international and 22 national scientific meetings, serving as first author and presenter in 27 of them. The candidate has served as Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator in numerous clinical trials and international research projects evaluating novel medicinal products for the treatment of lung cancer and breast cancer, while strictly adhering to the principles of Good Clinical Practice (GCP).

She also participates in the INTERACT EUROPE100 project of the European Cancer Organisation, funded by the European Commission, which brings together 100 leading oncology centres across Europe to promote education and training in oncology.

The submitted Statement of Compliance with the Minimum National Requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor demonstrates that the candidate not only fulfills but substantially exceeds the required national criteria, as illustrated in the table below.

Indicator	Required for Associate Professor	Candidate
A. Doctoral dissertation (Doctor/PhD degree)	50 points	50 points
B. Monograph or equivalent publications	100 points	100 points
C. Publications (Indicators 5–9)	200 points	458.34 points
D. Citations (Indicators 10–12)	50 points	230 points
Total	400 points	838.34 points

IV. Impact of the Candidate's Publications in the National and International Scientific Literature (Citation Profile)

Dr. Zlatanova's scientific work has been recognized by the scientific community as being of considerable significance. The substantial interest in her publications is evidenced by the significant number of citations, predominantly in international scientific literature.

According to Citation Report No. 407/24.04.2026, issued by the Central Medical Library of the Medical University – Sofia, the candidate has received a total of 39 citations, including 5 citations indexed in Scopus, 6 indexed in Web of Science, and 28 citations in Bulgarian scientific publications.

Her Hirsch Index (h-index) is 2 in Scopus and 2 in Web of Science.

V. Comprehensive Qualitative Assessment of the Candidate's Teaching and Educational Activities, Including the Supervision of Undergraduate Students, Doctoral Candidates, and Medical Residents

Dr. Tanya Zlatanova's academic activity is closely related to the education and training of medical students.

Since 2020, she has served as a part-time lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", where she conducts practical classes in Propaedeutics of Internal Diseases for third-year medical students, with an annual teaching workload of approximately 210–225 hours.

At Acibadem City Clinic University Hospital Tokuda EAD, she actively participates in the postgraduate training of Medical Oncology residents. During the period from 1 January 2021 to 1 May 2026, she has completed a total teaching workload of 855.5 equivalent teaching hours devoted to resident education.

She currently serves as the official supervisor of one resident physician in Medical Oncology.

Her overall teaching workload during the period 2020–2025 amounts to 1,950.5 equivalent teaching hours.

VI. Scientific Contributions of Dr. Tanya Lyubomirova Zlatanova, MD, PhD

A review of Dr. Zlatanova's scientific achievements reveals her broad research interests in the field of oncology, with a particular focus on the systemic treatment of thoracic malignancies—primarily non-small cell and small cell lung cancer—as well as immuno-oncology, breast cancer, gynecological malignancies, gastrointestinal tumors, and the prognostic significance of systemic inflammatory markers in oncology. Her extensive scientific and clinical expertise, combined with her ability to critically analyze, synthesize, and interpret scientific evidence, has enabled her to produce numerous original and confirmatory findings of both theoretical and practical importance.

Dr. Zlatanova's research and applied scientific activities may be summarized in the following principal areas, which reflect her contributions of scientific-theoretical, scientific-applied, and confirmatory significance.

1. Systemic inflammatory markers and the risk of thromboembolism in oncology

This represents the candidate's principal field of research and the focus of her doctoral dissertation. For the first time in Bulgaria, the prognostic and predictive significance of the inflammatory indices Systemic Immune-Inflammation Index (SII), Khorana Score (KS), modified Khorana Score, and the Advanced Lung Cancer Inflammation Index (ALI) has been investigated in relation to progression-free survival, overall survival, and tumor response in patients with metastatic non-small cell lung cancer treated with first-line immunotherapy alone or combined chemoimmunotherapy, as well as their association with the risk of venous thromboembolism.

2. Diagnosis and treatment of lung cancer

Dr. Zlatanova has systematically summarized current scientific knowledge regarding the structure, mechanisms of action, and clinical application of antibody-drug conjugates (ADCs) in both non-small cell and small cell lung cancer, including the principal molecular targets (HER2, HER3, TROP-2, DLL3, B7-H3, MET, CEACAM5, and SEZ6) and the factors influencing their efficacy and toxicity.

3. Immuno-oncology

The candidate has integrated the results of the landmark clinical trials KEYNOTE-024, KEYNOTE-189, KEYNOTE-407, IMpower130, IMpower132, IMpower150, CheckMate 227, and CheckMate 9LA, summarized the role of predictive biomarkers (PD-L1 and tumor mutational burden (TMB)), as well as the importance of the tumor microenvironment, and has proposed a concept for the individualized systemic treatment of patients with non-small cell lung cancer.

4. Diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer

Dr. Zlatanova has systematically reviewed current knowledge regarding the molecular classification of breast cancer and the mechanisms underlying endocrine resistance, including ESR1 mutations and alterations involving the PI3K/AKT/mTOR and CDK4/6 signaling pathways.

5. Gynecological malignancies, gastrointestinal tumors, and prostate cancer

The candidate is a co-author of two national evidence-based clinical guidelines developed according to the GRADE methodology: one addressing the management of cholangiocarcinoma (2024) and the other the management of cervical cancer (2025), both prepared within the framework of the Expert Board of the National Oncology Conference MORE.

6. Clinical case reports from real-world practice

Dr. Zlatanova has published several clinically relevant and scientifically valuable case reports, including a rare case of metastatic hyperprogression following consolidative immunotherapy with durvalumab, as well as cases of the concomitant occurrence of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis and lung cancer, thereby contributing to the differential diagnostic process and expanding current knowledge of rare clinical conditions.

VII. Clinical and Professional Activity

Dr. Tanya Zlatanova, MD, PhD, is a well-established medical oncologist with extensive clinical and teaching experience and is a respected and distinguished member of the academic oncology community. She is a highly qualified specialist with many years of professional experience who has earned the confidence and respect of both her patients and colleagues in the field of clinical oncology.

In addition to her clinical and academic work, Dr. Zlatanova has an active record of expert and organizational activities. She serves as a member of the Expert Group for Programme Accreditation of the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (2026); Chair of committees for Health Technology Assessment within the National Council on Prices and Reimbursement of Medicinal Products; Vice-Chair and Secretary of the Organizing and Scientific Committees of the national Immuno-Oncology (IO 365) conferences and congresses; co-organizer of the annual multidisciplinary scientific meeting "Comprehensive Management in the Modern Treatment of Thoracic Malignancies"; and member of the Executive Board of the Bulgarian Scientific Society of Immuno-Oncology (BSSIO).

CONCLUSION

The scientific publications submitted by Dr. Tanya Lyubomirova Zlatanova, MD, PhD, published in prestigious Bulgarian and international scientific journals, together with the number of citations and the remaining scientometric indicators, fully satisfy and substantially exceed the requirements laid down in the Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (ASDRBA), the Regulations for its Implementation, and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of Acibadem City Clinic University Hospital Tokuda EAD for the academic position of Associate Professor.

On the basis of the above, I confidently recommend that the distinguished Scientific Jury award Dr. Tanya Lyubomirova Zlatanova, MD, PhD, the academic position of Associate Professor in the scientific specialty of Oncology.

7 July 2026, Sofia

Prof. Petranka Troyanova, MD, PhD

